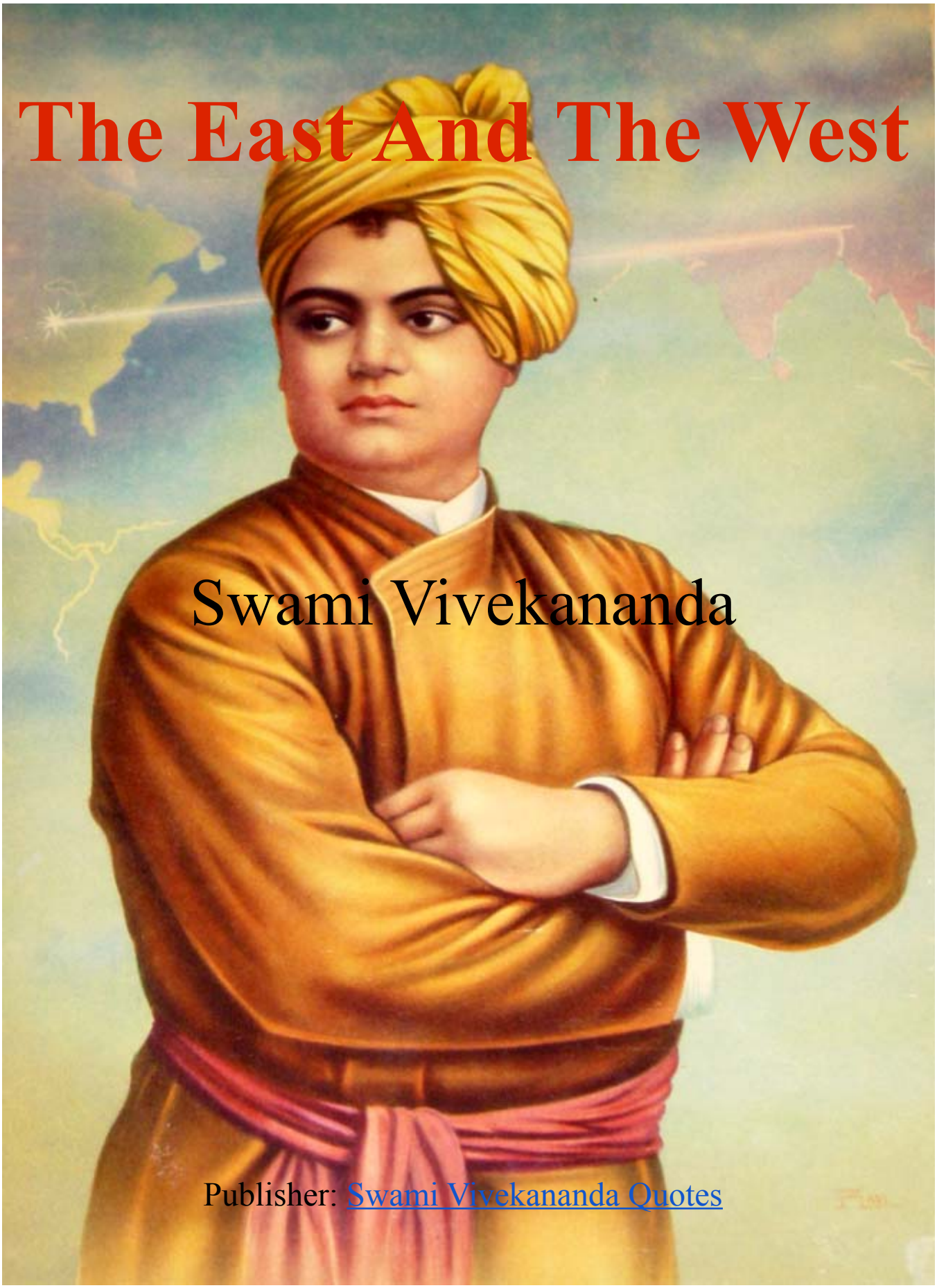
The East And The West



Swami Vivekananda

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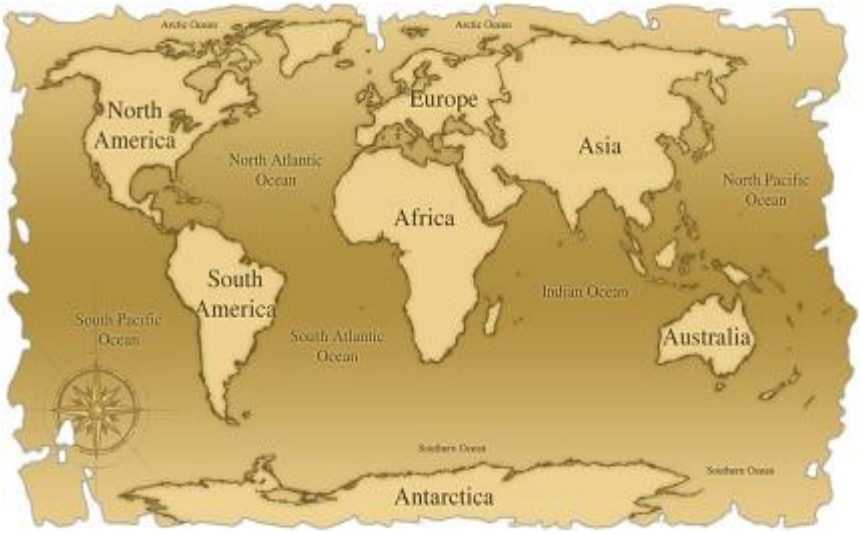

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Quick navigation

Title page, **Contents**, Book details, I: Introduction, II: Customs: Eastern and Western, III: Food and Cooking, IV: Civilisation in dress, V: Etiquette and Manners, VI: France-Paris, VII: Progress of Civilisation

Quick navigation
Title page, **Contents**, Book details, I: Introduction, II: Customs: Eastern and Western, III: Food and Cooking, IV: Civilisation in dress, V: Etiquette and Manners, VI: France-Paris, VII: Progress of Civilisation

Table of Contents

Book details

1. Book details

Chapters

1. Introduction
2. Customs: Eastern and Western
3. Food and Cooking
4. Civilisation in dress
5. Etiquette and Manners
6. France-Paris
7. Progress of Civilisation

Book details

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Quick navigation
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I. Introduction

Vast and deep rivers—swelling and impetuous—charming pleasure-gardens by the river banks, putting to shame the celestial Nandana-Kânana; amidst these pleasure-gardens rise, towering to the sky, beautiful marble palaces, decorated with the most exquisite workmanship of fine art; on the sides, in front, and behind, clusters of huts, with crumbling mud-walls and dilapidated roofs, the bamboos of which, forming their skeletons, as it were, are exposed to view; moving about here and there emaciated figures of young and old in tattered rags, whose faces bear deep-cut lines of the despair and poverty of hundreds of years; cows, bullocks, buffaloes everywhere—ay, the same melancholy look in their eyes, the same feeble physique; on the wayside refuse and dirt: This is our present-day India!

Worn-out huts by the very side of palaces, piles of refuse in the near proximity of temples, the Sannyâsin clad with only a little loin-cloth, walking by the gorgeously dressed, the pitiful gaze of lustreless eyes of the hunger-stricken at the well-fed and the amply-provided: This is our native land!

Devastation by violent plague and cholera; malaria eating into the very vitals of the nation; starvation and semi-starvation as second nature; death-like famine often dancing its tragic dance; the Kurukshetra (battlefield) of malady and misery, the huge cremation ground, strewn with the dead bones of lost hope, activity, joy, and courage; and in the midst of that, sitting in august silence, the Yogi, absorbed in deep communion with the Spirit, with no other goal in life than Moksha: This is what meets the eye of the European traveller in India.

A conglomeration of three hundred million souls, resembling men only in appearance, crushed out of life by being downtrodden by their own people and foreign nations, by people professing their own religion and by others of foreign faiths; patient in labour and suffering and devoid of initiative like the slave; without any hope, without any past, without any future; desirous only of maintaining the present life anyhow, however precarious; of malicious nature befitting a slave, to whom the prosperity of their fellow-men is unbearable; bereft of Shraddhâ, like one with whom all hope is dead, faithless; whose weapon of defence is base trickery, treachery, and slyness like that of a fox; the embodiment of selfishness; licking the dust of the feet of the strong, withal dealing a death-blow to those who are comparatively weak; full of ugly, diabolical superstitions which come naturally to those who are weak and hopeless of the future; without any standard of morality as their backbone; three hundred millions of souls such as these are swarming on the body of India like so many worms on a rotten, stinking carcass: This is the picture concerning us, which naturally presents itself to the English official!

Maddened with the wine of newly acquired powers; devoid of discrimination between right and wrong; fierce like wild beasts, henpecked, lustful; drenched in liquor, having no idea of chastity or purity, nor of cleanly ways and habits; believing in matter only, with a civilisation resting on matter and its various applications; addicted to the aggrandisement of self by exploiting others' countries, others' wealth, by force, trick, and treachery; having no faith in the life hereafter,

whose Âtman (Self) is the body, whose whole life is only in the senses and creature comforts: Thus, to the Indian, the Westerner is the veriest demon (Asura).

These are the views of observers on both sides—views born of mutual indiscrimination and superficial knowledge or ignorance. The foreigners, the Europeans, come to India, live in palatial buildings in the perfectly clean and healthy quarters of our towns and compare our "native" quarters with their neat and beautifully laid-out cities at home; the Indians with whom they come in contact are only of one class—those who hold some sort of employment under them. And, indeed, distress and poverty are nowhere else to be met with as in India; besides that, there is no gainsaying that dirt and filth are everywhere. To the European mind, it is inconceivable that anything good can possibly be amidst such dirt, such slavery, and such degradation.

We, on the other hand, see that the Europeans eat without discrimination whatever they get, have no idea of cleanliness as we have, do not observe caste distinctions, freely mix with women, drink wine, and shamelessly dance at a ball, men and women held in each other's arms: and we ask ourselves in amazement, what good can there be in such a nation?

Both these views are derived from without, and do not look within and below the surface. We do not allow foreigners to mix in our society, and we call them Mlechchhas; they also in their turn hate us as slaves and call us "niggers". In both of these views there must be some truth, though neither of the parties has seen the real thing behind the other.

With every man, there is an idea; the external man is only the outward manifestation, the mere language of this idea within. Likewise, every nation has a corresponding national idea. This idea is working for the world and is necessary for its preservation. The day when the necessity of an idea as an element for the preservation of the world is over, that very day the receptacle of that idea, whether it be an individual or a nation, will meet destruction. The reason that we Indians are still living, in spite of so much misery, distress, poverty, and oppression from within and without is that we have a national idea, which is yet necessary for the preservation of the world. The Europeans too have a national idea of their own, without which the world will not go on; therefore they are so strong. Does a man live a moment, if he loses all his strength? A nation is the sum total of so many individual men; will a nation live if it has utterly lost all its strength and activity? Why did not this Hindu race die out, in the face of so many troubles and tumults of a thousand years? If our customs and manners are so very bad, how is it that we have not been effaced from the face of the earth by this time? Have the various foreign conquerors spared any pains to crush us out? Why, then, were not the Hindus blotted out of existence, as happened with men in other countries which are uncivilised? Why was not India depopulated and turned into a wilderness? Why, then foreigners would have lost no time to come and settle in India, and till her fertile lands in the same way as they did and are still doing in America, Australia, and Africa! Well, then, my foreigner, you are not so strong as you think yourself to be; it is a vain imagination. First understand that India has strength as well, has a substantial reality of her own yet. Furthermore, understand that India is still living, because she has her own quota yet to give to the general store of the world's civilisation. And you too understand this full well, I mean those of our countrymen who have become thoroughly Europeanised both in external habits and

in ways of thought and ideas, and who are continually crying their eyes out and praying to the European to save them—"We are degraded, we have come down to the level of brutes; O ye European people, you are our saviours, have pity on us and raise us from this fallen state!" And you too understand this, who are singing *Te Deums* and raising a hue and cry that Jesus is come to India, and are seeing the fulfilment of the divine decree in the fullness of time. Oh, dear! No! neither Jesus is come nor Jehovah; nor will they come; they are now busy in saving their own hearths and homes and have no time to come to our country. Here is the selfsame Old Shiva seated as before, the bloody Mother Kâli worshipped with the selfsame paraphernalia, the pastoral Shepherd of Love, Shri Krishna, playing on His flute. Once this Old Shiva, riding on His bull and laboring on His Damaru travelled from India, on the one side, to Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Australia, as far as the shores of America, and on the other side, this Old Shiva battened His bull in Tibet, China, Japan, and as far up as Siberia, and is still doing the same. The Mother Kali is still exacting Her worship even in China and Japan: it is She whom the Christians metamorphosed into the Virgin Mary, and worship as the mother of Jesus the Christ. Behold the Himalayas! There to the north is Kailâs, the main abode of the Old Shiva. That throne the ten-headed, twenty-armed, mighty Ravana could not shake—now for the missionaries to attempt the task?—Bless my soul! Here in India will ever be the Old Shiva laboring on his Damaru, the Mother Kali worshipped with animal sacrifice, and the lovable Shri Krishna playing on His flute. Firm as the Himalayas they are; and no attempts of anyone, Christian or other missionaries, will ever be able to remove them. If you cannot bear them—avaunt! For a handful of you, shall a whole nation be wearied out of all patience and bored to death ? Why don't you make your way somewhere else where you may find fields to graze upon freely—the wide world is open to you! But no, that they won't do. Where is that strength to do it? They would eat the salt of that Old Shiva and play Him false, slander Him, and sing the glory of a foreign Saviour—dear me! To such of our countrymen who go whimpering before foreigners—"We are very low, we are mean, we are degraded, everything we have is diabolical"—to them we say: "Yes, that may be the truth, forsooth, because you profess to be truthful and we have no reason to disbelieve you; but why do you include the whole nation in that *We*? Pray, sirs, what sort of good manner is that?"

First, we have to understand that there are not any good qualities which are the privileged monopoly of one nation only. Of course, as with individuals, so with nations, there may be a prevalence of certain good qualities, more or less in one nation than in another.

With us, the prominent idea is Mukti; with the Westerners, it is Dharma. What we desire is Mukti; what they want is Dharma. Here the word "Dharma" is used in the sense of the Mimâmsakas. What is Dharma? Dharma is that which makes man seek for happiness in this world or the next. Dharma is established on work, Dharma is impelling man day and night to run after and work for happiness.

What is Mukti? That which teaches that even the happiness of this life is slavery, and the same is the happiness of the life to come, because neither this world nor the next is beyond the laws of nature; only, the slavery of this world is to that of the next as an iron chain is to a golden one. Again, happiness, wherever it may be, being within the laws of nature, is subject to death and will not last *ad infinitum*. Therefore man must aspire to become Mukta, he must go beyond the

bondage of the body; slavery will not do. This Mokshapath is only in India and nowhere else. Hence is true the oft-repeated saying that Mukta souls are only in India and in no other country. But it is equally true that in future they will be in other countries as well; that is well and good, and a thing of great pleasure to us. There was a time in India when Dharma was compatible with Mukti. There were worshippers of Dharma, such as Yudhishthira, Arjuna, Duryodhana, Bhishma, and Karna, side by side with the aspirants of Mukti, such as Vyâsa, Shuka, and Janaka. On the advent of Buddhism, Dharma was entirely neglected, and the path of Moksha alone became predominant. Hence, we read in the Agni Purâna, in the language of similes, that the demon Gayâsura—that is, Buddha[1]—tried to destroy the world by showing the path of Moksha to all; and therefore the Devas held a council and by stratagem set him at rest for ever. However, the central fact is that the fall of our country, of which we hear so much spoken, is due to the utter want of this Dharma. If the whole nation practices and follows the path of Moksha, that is well and good; but is that possible? Without enjoyment, renunciation can never come; first enjoy and then you can renounce. Otherwise, if the whole nation, all of a sudden, takes up Sannyâsa, it does not gain what it desires, but it loses what it had into the bargain—the bird in the hand is fled, nor is that in the bush caught. When, in the heyday of Buddhistic supremacy, thousands of Sannyâsins lived in every monastery, then it was that the country was just on the verge of its ruin! The Bauddhas, the Christians, the Mussulmans, and the Jains prescribe, in their folly, the same law and the same rule for all. That is a great mistake; education, habits, customs, laws, and rules should be different for different men and nations, in conformity with their difference of temperament. What will it avail, if one tries to make them all uniform by compulsion? The Bauddhas declared, "Nothing is more desirable in life than Moksha; whoever you are, come one and all to take it." I ask, "Is that ever possible?" "You are a householder, you must not concern yourself much with things of that sort: you do your Svadharma (natural duty)"—thus say the Hindu scriptures. Exactly so! He who cannot leap one foot, is going to jump across the ocean to Lankâ in one bound! Is it reason? You cannot feed your own family or dole out food to two of your fellow-men, you cannot do even an ordinary piece of work for the common good, in harmony with others—and you are running after Mukti! The Hindu scriptures say, "No doubt, Moksha is far superior to Dharma; but Dharma should be finished first of all". The Bauddhas were confounded just there and brought about all sorts of mischief. Non-injury is right; "Resist not evil" is a great thing—these are indeed grand principles; but the scriptures say, "Thou art a householder; if anyone smites thee on thy cheek, and thou dost not return him an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, thou wilt verily be a sinner." Manu says, "When one has come to kill you, there is no sin in killing him, even though he be a Brâhmin" (Manu, VIII. 350). This is very true, and this is a thing which should not be forgotten. Heroes only enjoy the world. Show your heroism; apply, according to circumstances, the fourfold political maxims of conciliation, bribery, sowing dissensions, and open war, to win over your adversary and enjoy the world—then you will be Dhârmika (righteous). Otherwise, you live a disgraceful life if you pocket your insults when you are kicked and trodden down by anyone who takes it into his head to do so; your life is a veritable hell here, and so is the life hereafter. This is what the Shastras say. Do your Svadharma—this is truth, the truth of truths. This is my advice to you, my beloved co-

1 Swamiji afterwards changed this view with reference to Buddha, as is evident from the letter dated Varanasi, the 9th February, 1902, in his *Complete Works*.

religionists. Of course, do not do any wrong, do not injure or tyrannise over anyone, but try to do good to others as much as you can. But passively to submit to wrong done by others is a sin—with the householder. He must try to pay them back in their own coin then and there. The householder must earn money with great effort and enthusiasm, and by that must support and bring comforts to his own family and to others, and perform good works as far as possible. If you cannot do that, how do you profess to be a man? You are not a householder even—what to talk of Moksha for you!!

We have said before that Dharma is based on work. The nature of the Dharmika is constant performance of action with efficiency. Why, even the opinion of some Mimamsakas is that those parts of the Vedas which do not enjoin work are not, properly speaking, Vedas at all. One of the aphorisms of Jaimini runs thus: "आम्नायस्य क्रियार्थत्वादानर्थक्यमतदर्थानाम्–The purpose of the Vedas being work, those parts of the Vedas that do not deal with work miss the mark."

"By constant repetition of the syllable Om and by meditating on its meaning, everything can be obtained"; "All sins are washed away by uttering the name of the Lord"; "He gets all, who resigns himself to the Will of God"—yes, these words of the Shastras and the sages are, no doubt, true. But, do you see, thousands of us are, for our whole life, meditating on Om, are getting ecstatic in devotion in the name of the Lord, and are crying, "Thy Will be done, I am fully resigned to Thee! "—and what are they actually getting in return? Absolutely nothing! How do you account for this? The reason lies here, and it must be fully understood. Whose meditation is real and effective? Who can really resign himself to the Will of God? Who can utter with power irresistible, like that of a thunderbolt, the name of the Lord? It is he who has earned Chitta-shuddhi, that is, whose mind has been purified by work, or in other words, he who is the Dharmika.

Every individual is a centre for the manifestation of a certain force. This force has been stored up as the resultant of our previous works, and each one of us is born with this force at his back. So long as this force has not worked itself out, who can possibly remain quiet and give up work? Until then, he will have to enjoy or suffer according to the fruition of his good or bad work and will be irresistibly impelled to do work. Since enjoyment and work cannot be given up till then, is it not better to do good rather than bad works—to enjoy happiness rather than suffer misery? Shri Ramprasad[2] used to say, "They speak of two works, 'good' and 'bad'; of them, it is better to do the good."

Now what is that good which is to be pursued? The good for him who desires Moksha is one, and the good for him who wants Dharma is another. This is the great truth which the Lord Shri Krishna, the revealer of the Gita, has tried therein to explain, and upon this great truth is established the Varnâshrama[3] system and the doctrine of Svadharma etc. of the Hindu religion.

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2 A Bengali saint, devotee of Kali, and an inspired poet who composed songs in praise of the Deity, expressing the highest truths of religion in the simplest words.

3 Four castes and four stages of life.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ (Gita, XII.13.)

—"He who has no enemy, and is friendly and compassionate towards all, who is free from the feelings of 'me and mine', even-minded in pain and pleasure, and forbearing"—these and other epithets of like nature are for him whose one goal in life is Moksha.

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ (Gita, II. 3.)

—"Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Prithâ! Ill cloth it befit thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise. O scorcher of thine enemies."

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।

मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ (Gita, XI. 33.)

—"Therefore do thou arise and acquire fame. After conquering thy enemies, enjoy unrivalled dominion; verily, by Myself have they been already slain; be thou merely the instrument, O Savyasâchin (Arjuna)."

In these and similar passages in the Gita the Lord is showing the way to Dharma. Of course, work is always mixed with good and evil, and to work, one has to incur sin, more or less. But what of that? Let it be so. Is not something better than nothing? Is not insufficient food better than going without any? Is not doing work, though mixed with good and evil, better than doing nothing and passing an idle and inactive life, and being like stones? The cow never tells a lie, and the stone never steals, but, nevertheless, the cow remains a cow and the stone a stone. Man steals and man tells lies, and again it is man that becomes a god. With the prevalence of the Sâttvika essence, man becomes inactive and rests always in a state of deep Dhyâna or contemplation; with the prevalence of the Rajas, he does bad as well as good works; and with the prevalence of the Tamas again, he becomes inactive and inert. Now, tell me, looking from outside, how are we to understand, whether you are in a state wherein the Sattva or the Tamas prevails? Whether we are in the state of Sattvika calmness, beyond all pleasure and pain, and past all work and activity, or whether we are in the lowest Tâmasika state, lifeless, passive, dull as dead matter, and doing no work, because there is no power in us to do it, and are, thus, silently and by degrees, getting rotten and corrupted within—I seriously ask you this question and demand an answer. Ask your own mind, and you shall know what the reality is. But, what need to wait for the answer? The tree is known by its fruit. The Sattva prevailing, the man is inactive, he is calm, to be sure; but that inactivity is the outcome of the centralization of great powers, that calmness is the mother of tremendous energy. That highly Sattivka man, that great soul, has no longer to work as we do with hands and feet—by his mere willing only, all his works are immediately accomplished to perfection. That man of predominating Sattva is the Brahmin, the worshipped of all. Has he to go about from door to door, begging others to worship him? The Almighty Mother of the universe writes with Her own hand, in golden letters on his forehead, "Worship ye all, this great one, this son of Mine", and the world reads and listens to it and humbly bows down its head before him in obedience. That man is really—

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ (Gita, XII.13.)

—"He who has no enemy, and is friendly and compassionate towards all, who is free from the feelings of 'me and mine', even-minded in pain and pleasure, and forbearing." And mark you, those things which you see in pusillanimous, effeminate folk who speak in a nasal tone chewing every syllable, whose voice is as thin as of one who has been starving for a week, who are like a tattered wet rag, who never protest or are moved even if kicked by anybody—those are the signs of the lowest Tamas, those are the signs of death, not of Sattva—all corruption and stench. It is because Arjuna was going to fall into the ranks of these men that the Lord is explaining matters to him so elaborately in the Gita. Is that not the fact? Listen to the very first words that came out of the mouth of the Lord, "क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते–Yield not to unmanliness, O Pârtha! Ill, doth it befit thee!" and then later, "तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व–Therefore do thou arise and acquire fame." Coming under the influence of the Jains, Buddhas, and others, we have joined the lines of those Tamasika people. During these last thousand years, the whole country is filling the air with the name of the Lord and is sending its prayers to Him; and the Lord is never lending His ears to them. And why should He? When even man never hears the cries of the fool, do you think God will? Now the only way out is to listen to the words of the Lord in the Gita, "क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ–Yield not to unmanliness, O Partha!" "तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व–Therefore do thou arise and acquire fame."

Now let us go on with our subject-matter—the East and the West. First see the irony of it. Jesus Christ, the God of the Europeans, has taught: Have no enemy, bless them that curse you; whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; stop all your work and be ready for the next world; the end of the world is near at hand. And our Lord in the Gita is saying: Always work with great enthusiasm, destroy your enemies and enjoy the world. But, after all, it turned out to be exactly the reverse of what Christ or Krishna implied. The Europeans never took the words of Jesus Christ seriously. Always of active habits, being possessed of a tremendous Râjasika nature, they are gathering with great enterprise and youthful ardour the comforts and luxuries of the different countries of the world and enjoying them to their hearts' content. And we are sitting in a corner, with our bag and baggage, pondering on death day and night, and singing," नलिनीदलगतजलमतितरलं तद्वज्जीवितमतिशयचपलम्–Very tremulous and unsteady is the water on the lotus-leaf; so is the life of man frail and transient"—with the result that it is making our blood run cold and our flesh creep with the fear of Yama, the god of death; and Yama, too, alas, has taken us at our word, as it were—plague and all sorts of maladies have entered into our country! Who are following the teachings of the Gita?—the Europeans. And who are acting according to the will of Jesus Christ?—The descendants of Shri Krishna! This must be well understood. The Vedas were the first to find and proclaim the way to Moksha, and from that one source, the Vedas, was taken whatever any great Teacher, say, Buddha or Christ, afterwards taught. Now, they were Sannyasins, and therefore they "had no enemy and were friendly and compassionate towards all". That was well and good for them. But why this attempt to compel the whole world to follow the same path to Moksha? "Can beauty be manufactured by rubbing and scrubbing? Can anybody's love be won by threats or force?" What does Buddha or Christ prescribe for the man who neither wants Moksha nor is fit to receive it?—Nothing! Either you must have Moksha or you are doomed to destruction—these are the only two ways held

forth by them, and there is no middle course. You are tied hand and foot in the matter of trying for anything other than Moksha. There is no way shown how you may enjoy the world a little for a time; not only all openings to that are hermetically sealed to you, but, in addition, there are obstructions put at every step. It is only the Vedic religion which considers ways and means and lays down rules for the fourfold attainment of man, comprising Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. Buddha ruined us, and so did Christ ruin Greece and Rome! Then, in due course of time, fortunately, the Europeans became Protestants, shook off the teachings of Christ as represented by Papal authority, and heaved a sigh of relief. In India, Kumârila again brought into currency the Karma-Mârga, the way of Karma only, and Shankara and Râmânuja firmly re-established the Eternal Vedic religion, harmonising and balancing in due proportions Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. Thus the nation was brought to the way of regaining its lost life; but India has three hundred million souls to wake, and hence the delay. To revive three hundred millions—can it be done in a day?

The aims of the Buddhistic and the Vedic religions are the same, but the means adopted by the Buddhistic are not right. If the Buddhistic means were correct, then why have we been thus hopelessly lost and ruined? It will not do to say that the efflux of time has naturally wrought this. Can time work, transgressing the laws of cause and effect?

Therefore, though the aims are the same, the Bauddhas for want of right means have degraded India. Perhaps my Bauddha brothers will be offended at this remark, and fret and fume; but there's no help for it; the truth ought to be told, and I do not care for the result. The right and correct means is that of the Vedas—the Jâti Dharma, that is, the Dharma enjoined according to the different castes—the Svadharma, that is, one's own Dharma, or set of duties prescribed for man according to his capacity and position—which is the very basis of Vedic religion and Vedic society. Again, perhaps, I am offending many of my friends, who are saying, I suppose, that I am flattering my own countrymen. Here let me ask them once for all: What do I gain by such flattery? Do they support me with any money or means? On the contrary, they try their best to get possession of money which I secure by begging from outside of India for feeding the famine-stricken and the helpless; and if they do not get it, they abuse and slander! Such then, O my educated countrymen, are the people of my country. I know them too well to expect anything from them by flattery. I know they have to be treated like the insane; and anyone who administers medicine to a madman must be ready to be rewarded with kicks and bites; but he is the true friend who forces the medicine down the throats of such and bears with them in patience.

Now, this Jati Dharma, this Svadharma, is the path of welfare of all societies in every land, the ladder to ultimate freedom. With the decay of this Jati Dharma, this Svadharma, has come the downfall of our land. But the Jati Dharma or Svadharma as commonly understood at present by the higher castes is rather a new evil, which has to be guarded against. They think they know everything of Jati Dharma, but really they know nothing of it. Regarding their own village customs as the eternal customs laid down by the Vedas, and appropriating to themselves all privileges, they are going to their doom! I am not talking of caste as determined by qualitative distinction, but of the hereditary caste system. I admit that the qualitative caste system is the primary one; but the pity is qualities yield to borth in two or three generations. Thus the vital

point of our national life has been touched; otherwise, why should we sink to this degraded state? Read in the Gita, "संकरस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः—I should then be the cause of the admixture of races, and I should thus ruin these beings." How came this terrible Varna-Sâmkarya —this confounding mixture of all castes—and disappearance of all qualitative distinctions? Why has the white complexion of our forefathers now become black? Why did the Sattvaguna give place to the prevailing Tamas with a sprinkling, as it were, of Rajas in it? That is a long story to tell, and I reserve my answer for some future occasion. For the present, try to understand this, that if the Jati Dharma be rightly and truly preserved, the nation shall never fall. If this is true, then what was it that brought our downfall? That we have fallen is the sure sign that the basis of the Jati Dharma has been tampered with. Therefore, what you call the Jati Dharma is quite contrary to what we have in fact. First, read your own Shastras through and through, and you will easily see that what the Shastras define as caste-Dharma, has disappeared almost everywhere from the land. Now try to bring back the true Jati Dharma, and then it will be a real and sure boon to the country. What I have learnt and understood, I am telling you plainly. I have not been imported from some foreign land to come and save you, that I should countenance all your foolish customs and give scientific explanations for them; it does not cost our foreign friends anything, they can well afford to do so. You cheer them up and heap applause upon them, and that is the acme of their ambition. But if dirt and dust be flung at your faces, it falls on mine too! Don't you see that?

I have said elsewhere that every nation has a national purpose of its own. Either in obedience to the Law of nature, or by virtue of the superior genius of the great ones, the social manners and customs of every nation are being moulded into shape, so as to bring that purpose to fruition. In the life of every nation, besides that purpose and those manners and customs that are essentially necessary to effect that purpose, all others are superfluous. It does not matter much whether those superfluous customs and manners grow or disappear; but a nation is sure to die when the main purpose of its life is hurt.

When we were children, we heard the story of a certain ogress who had her soul living in a small bird, and unless the bird was killed, the ogress would never die. The life of a nation is also like that. Again another thing you will observe, that a nation will never greatly grudge if it be deprived of these rights which have not much to do with its national purpose, nay, even if all of such are wrested from it; but when the slightest blow is given to that purpose on which rests its national life, that moment it reacts with tremendous power.

Take for instance the case of the three living nations, of whose history you know more or less, viz. the French, the English, and the Hindu. Political independence is the backbone of the French character. French subjects bear calmly all oppressions. Burden them with heavy taxes, they will not raise the least voice against them; compel the whole nation to join the army, they never complain; but the instant anyone meddles with that political independence, the whole nation will rise as one man and madly react. No one man shall be allowed to usurp authority over us; whether learned or ignorant, rich or poor, of noble birth or of the lower classes, we have equal share in the Government of our country, and in the independent control of our society—this is the root-principle of the French character. He must suffer Who will try to interfere with this

freedom.

In the English character, the "give and take" policy, the business principle of the trader, is principally inherent. To the English, just and equitable distribution of wealth is of essential interest. The Englishman humbly submits to the king and to the privileges of the nobility; only if he has to pay a farthing from his pocket, he must demand an account of it. There is the king; that is all right; he is ready to obey and honour him; but if the king wants money, the Englishman says: All right, but first let me understand why it is needed, what good it will bring; next, I must have my say in the matter of how it is to be spent, and then I shall part with it. The king, once trying to exact money from the English people by force, brought about a great revolution. They killed the king.

The Hindu says that political and social independence are well and good, but the real thing is spiritual independence—Mukti. This is our national purpose; whether you take the Vaidika, the Jaina, or the Bauddha, the Advaita, the Vishishtâdvaita, or the Dvaita—there, they are all of one mind. Leave that point untouched and do whatever you like, the Hindu is quite unconcerned and keeps silence; but if you run foul of him there, beware, you court your ruin. Rob him of everything he has, kick him, call him a "nigger" or any such name, he does not care much; only keep that one gate of religion free and unmolested. Look here, how in the modern period the Pathan dynasties were coming and going, but could nor get a firm hold of their Indian Empire, because they were all along attacking the Hindu's religion. And see, how firmly based, how tremendously strong was the Mogul Empire. Why? Because the Moguls left that point untouched. In fact, Hindus were the real prop of the Mogul Empire; do you not know that Jahangir, Shahjahan, and Dara Shikoh were all born of Hindu mothers? Now then observe—as soon as the ill-fated Aurangzeb again touched that point, the vast Mogul Empire vanished in an instant like a dream. Why is it that the English throne is so firmly established in India? Because it never touches the religion of the land in any way. The sapient Christian missionaries tried to tamper a little with this point, and the result was the Mutiny of 1857. So long as the English understand this thoroughly and act accordingly, their throne in India will remain unsullied and unshaken. The wise and far-seeing among the English also comprehend this and admit it—read Lord Roberts's *Forty-one Years in India*.[4]

Now you understand clearly where the soul of this ogress is—it is in religion. Because no one was able to destroy that, therefore the Hindu nation is still living, having survived so many troubles and tribulations. Well, One Indian scholar asks, "what is the use of keeping the soul of the nation in religion? Why not keep it in social or political independence, as is the case with other nations?" It is very easy to talk like that. If it be granted, for the sake of argument, that religion and spiritual independence, and soul, God, and Mukti are all false, even then see how the matter stands. As the same fire is manifesting itself in different forms, so the same one great Force is manifesting itself as political independence with the French, as mercantile genius and expansion of the sphere of equity with the English, and as the desire for Mukti or spiritual independence with the Hindu. Be it noted that by the impelling of this great Force, has been

4 *Vide* 30th and 31st Chapters.

moulded the French and the English character, through several centuries of vicissitudes of fortune; and also by the inspiration of that great Force, with the rolling of thousands of centuries, has been the present evolution of the Hindu national character. I ask in all seriousness—which is easier, to give up our national character evolved out of thousands of centuries, or your grafted foreign character of a few hundred years? Why do not the English forget their warlike habits and give up fighting and bloodshed, and sit calm and quiet concentrating their whole energy on making religion the sole aim of their life?

The fact is, that the river has come down a thousand miles from its source in the mountains; does it, or can it go back to its source? If it ever tries to trace back its course, it will simply dry up by being dissipated in all directions. Anyhow the river is sure to fall into the ocean, sooner or later, either by passing through open and beautiful plaints or struggling through grimy soil. If our national life of these ten thousand years has been a mistake, then there is no help for it; and if we try now to form a new character, the inevitable result will be that we shall die.

But, excuse me if I say that it is sheer ignorance and want of proper understanding to think like that, namely, that our national ideal has been a mistake. First go to other countries and study carefully their manners and conditions with your own eyes—not with others'—and reflect on them with a thoughtful brain, if you have it: then read your own scriptures, your ancient literature travel throughout India, and mark the people of her different parts and their ways and habits with the wide-awake eye of an intelligent and keen observer—not with a fool's eye—and you will see as clear as noonday that the nation is still living intact and its life is surely pulsating. You will find there also that, hidden under the ashes of apparent death, the fire of our national life is yet smouldering and that the life of this nation is religion, its language religion, and its idea religion; and your politics, society, municipality, plague-prevention work, and famine-relief work—all these things will be done as they have been done all along here, viz. only through religion; otherwise all your frantic yelling and bewailing will end in nothing, my friend!

Besides, in every country, the means is the same after all, that is, whatever only a handful of powerful men dictate becomes the *fait accompli*; the rest of the men only follow like a flock of sheep, that's all. I have seen your Parliament, your Senate, your vote, majority, ballot; it is the same thing everywhere, my friend. The powerful men in every country are moving society whatever way they like, and the rest are only like a flock of sheep. Now the question is this, who are these men of power in India?—they who are giants in religion. It is they who lead our society; and it is they again who change our social laws and usages when necessity demands: and we listen to them silently anti do what they command. The only difference with ours is, that we have not that superfluous fuss and bustle of the majority, the vote, ballot, and similar concomitant tugs-of-war as in other countries. That is all.

Of course we do not get that education which the common people in the West do, by the system of vote and ballot etc., but, on the other hand, we have not also amongst us that class of people who, in the name of politics, rob others and fatten themselves by sucking the very life-blood of the masses in all European countries. If you ever saw, my friend that shocking sight behind the scene of acting of these politicians—that revelry of bribery, that robbery in broad daylight, that

dance of the Devil in man, which are practiced on such occasions—you would be hopeless about man! "Milk goes abegging from door to door, while the grog-shop is crowded; the chaste woman seldom gets the wherewithal to hide her modesty, while the woman of the town flutters about in all her jewelry!" They that have money have kept the government of the land under their thumb, are robbing the people and sending them as soldiers to fight and be slain on foreign shores, so that, in case of victory; their coffers may be full of gold bought by the blood of the subject-people on the field of battle. And the subject-people? Well, theirs is only to shed their blood. This is politics! Don't be startled, my friend; don't be lost in its mazes.

First of all, try to understand this: Does man make laws, or do laws make man? Does man make money, or does money make man? Does man make name and fame, or name and fame make man?

Be a man first, my friend, and you will see how all those things and the rest will follow of themselves after you. Give up that hateful malice, that dog-like bickering and barking at one another, and take your stand on goal purpose, right means, righteous courage, and be brave When you are born a man, leave some indelible mark behind you. "When you first came to this world, O Tulsi,[5] the world rejoiced and you cried; now live your life in doing such acts that when you will leave this world, the world will cry for you and you will leave it laughing." If you can do that, then you are a man; otherwise, what good are you?

Next, you must understand this, my friend, that we have many things to learn from other nations. The man who says he has nothing more to learn is already at his last grasp. The nation that says it knows everything is on the very brink of destruction! "As long as I live, so long do I learn." But one point to note here is that when we take anything from others, we must mould it after our own way. We shall add to our stock what others have to teach, but we must always be careful to keep intact what is essentially our own. For instance, Suppose I want to have my dinner cooked in the European fashion. When taking food, the Europeans sit on chairs, and we are accustomed to squat on the floor. To imitate the Europeans, if I order my dinner to be served, on a table and have to sit on a chair more than an hour, my feet will be in a fair way of going to Yama's door, as they say, and I shall writhe in torture; what do you say to that? So I must squat on the floor in my own style, while having their dishes. Similarly, whenever we learn anything from others, we must mould it after our own fashion, always preserving in full our characteristic nationality. Let me ask, "Does man wear clothes or do clothes make the man?" The man of genius in any, dress commands respect; but nobody cares for fools like me, though carrying, like the washerman's ass, a load of clothes on my back.

5 Poet-saint Tulsidas

II. Customs: Eastern And Western

The foregoing, by way of an introduction, has come to be rather long; but after all this talk it will be easier for us to compare the two nations. They are good, and we are also good. "You can neither praise the one nor blame the other; both the scales are equal." Of course, there are gradations and varieties of good, this is all.

According to us, there are three things in the makeup of man. There is the body, there is the mind, and there is the soul. First let us consider the body, which is the most external thing about man.

First, see how various are the differences with respect to the body. How many varieties of nose, face, hair, height, complexion, breadth, etc., there are!

The modern ethnologists hold that variety of complexion is due to intermixture of blood. Though the hot or cold climate of the place to a certain extent affects the complexion, no doubt, yet the main cause of its change is heredity. Even in the coldest parts of the world, people with dark complexions are seen, and again in the hottest countries white men are seen to live. The complexion of the aboriginal tribes of Canada, in America, and of the Eskimos of the Northern Polar regions, is not white. While islands, such as Borneo, Celebes, etc., situated in the equatorial regions are peopled by white aborigines.

According to the Hindu Shastras, the three Hindu castes, Brahmana, Kshatriya, and Vaishya, and the several nations outside India, to wit, Cheen, Hun, Darad, Pahlava, Yavana, and Khâsh are all Aryas. This Cheen of our Shastras is not the modern Chinaman. Besides, in those days, the Chinamen did not call themselves Cheen at all. There was a distinct, powerful nation, called Cheen, living in the north-eastern parts of Kashmir, and the Darads lived where are now seen the hill-tribes between India and Afghanistan. Some remnants of the ancient Cheen are yet to be found in very small numbers, and Daradisthan is yet in existence. In the *Râjatarangini*, the history of Kashmir, references are often made to the supremacy of the powerful Darad-Raj. An ancient tribe of Huns reigned for a long period in the north-western parts of India. The Tibetans now call themselves Hun, but this Hun is perhaps "Hune". The fact is, that the Huns referred to in Manu are not the modern Tibetans, but it is quite probable that the modern Tibetans are the product of a mixture of the ancient Aryan Huns and some other Mogul tribes that came to Tibet from Central Asia. According to Prjevalski and the Duc d' Orleans, the Russian and French travellers, there are still found in some parts of Tibet tribes with faces and eyes of the Aryan type. "Yavana" was the name given to the Greeks. There has been much dispute about the origin of this name. Some say that the name Yavana was first used to designate a tribe of Greeks inhabiting the place called "Ionia", and hence, in the Pâli writs of the Emperor Asoka, the Greeks are named "Yonas", and afterwards from this "Yona" the Sanskrit word Yavana, was derived. Again, according to some of our Indian antiquarians, the word Yavana does not stand for the Greeks. But all these views are wrong. The original word is Yavana itself; for not only the Hindus but the ancient Egyptians and the Babylonians as well called the Greeks by that name.

By the word Pahlava is meant the ancient Parsees, speaking the Pahlavi tongue. Even now, Khash denotes the semi-civilised Aryan tribes living in mountainous regions and in the Himalayas, and the word is still used in this sense. In that sense, the present Europeans are the descendants of the Khash; in other words, those Aryan tribes that were uncivilised in ancient days are all Khash.

In the opinion of modern savants, the Aryans had reddish-white complexion, black or red hair, straight noses, well-drawn eyes, etc.; and the formation of the skull varied a little according to the colour of the hair. Where the complexion is dark, there the change has come to pass owing to the mixture of the pure Aryan blood with black races. They hold that there are still some tribes to the west of the Himalayan borders who are of pure Aryan blood, and that the rest are all of mixed blood; otherwise, how could they be dark? But the European Pundits ought to know by this time that, in the southern parts of India, many children are born with red hair, which after two or three years changes into black, and that in the Himalayas many have red hair and blue or grey eyes.

Let the Pundits fight among themselves; it is the Hindus who have all along called themselves Aryas. Whether of pure or mixed blood, the Hindus are Aryas; there it rests. If the Europeans do not like us, Aryas, because we are dark, let them take another name for themselves—what is that to us?

Whether black or white, it does not matter; but of all the nations of the world, the Hindus are the handsomest and finest in feature. I am not bragging nor saying anything in exaggeration because they belong to my own nationality, but this fact is known all over the world. Where else can one find a higher percentage of fine-featured men and women than in India? Besides, it has to be taken into consideration how much more is required in our country to make us look handsome than in other countries, because our bodies are so much more exposed. In other countries, the attempt is always to make ugly persons appear beautiful under cover of elaborate dresses and clothes.

Of course, in point of health, the Westerners are far superior to us. In the West, men of forty years and women of fifty years are still young. This is, no doubt, because they take good food, dress well and live in a good climate, and above all, the secret is that they do not marry at an early age. Ask those few strong tribes among ourselves and see what their marriageable age is. Ask the hill tribes, such as, the Goorkhas, the Punjabis, the Jats, and the Afridis, what their marriageable age is. Then read your own Shastras—thirty is the age fixed for the Brahmana, twenty-five for the Kshatriya, and twenty for the Vaishya. In point of longevity and physical and mental strength, there is a great difference between the Westerners and ourselves. As soon as we attain to forty, our hope and physical and mental strength are on the decline. While, at that age, full of youthful vigour and hope, they have only made a start.

We are vegetarians—most of our diseases are of the stomach; our old men and women generally die of stomach complaints. They of the West take meat—most of their diseases are of the heart; their old men and women generally die of heart or lung diseases. A learned doctor of the West observes that the people who have chronic stomach complaints generally tend to a melancholy

and renouncing nature, and the people suffering from complaints of the heart and the upper parts of the body have always hope and faith to the last; the cholera patient is from the very beginning afraid of death, while the consumptive patient hopes to the last moment that he will recover. "Is it owing to this," my doctor friend may with good reasoning ask, "that the Indians always talk and think of death and renunciation?" As yet I have not been able to find a satisfactory answer to this; but the question seems to have an air of truth about it, and demands serious consideration.

In our country, people suffer little from diseases of the teeth and hair; in the West, few people have natural, healthy teeth, and baldness is met with everywhere. Our women bore their noses and ears for wearing ornaments; in the West, among the higher classes, the women do not do those things much, nowadays; but by squeezing the waist, making the spine crooked, and thus displacing the liver and spleen and disfiguring the form, they suffer the torment of death to make themselves shapely in appearance and added to that is the burden of dress, over which they have to show their features to the best advantage. Their Western dress is, however, more suited for work. With the exception of the dress worn in society by the ladies of the wealthy classes, the dress of the women in general is ugly. The Sâri of our women, and the Chogâ, Châpkan, and turban of our men defy comparison as regards beauty in dress. The tight dresses cannot approach in beauty the loose ones that fall in natural folds. But all our dresses being flowing, and in folds, are not suited for doing work; in doing work, they are spoiled and done for. There is such a thing as fashion in the West. Their fashion is in dress, ours in ornaments, though nowadays it is entering a little into clothes also. Paris is the centre of fashion for ladies' dress and London for men's. The actresses of Paris often set the fashions. What new fashion of dress a distinguished actress of the time would wear, the fashionable world would greedily imitate. The big firms of dressmakers set the fashions nowadays. We can form no idea of the millions of pounds that are spent every year in the making of dress in the West. The dress-making business has become a regular science. What colour of dress will suit with the complexion of the girl and the colour of her hair, what special feature of her body should be disguised, and what displayed to the best advantage—these and many other like important points, the dressmakers have seriously to consider. Again, the dress that ladies of very high position wear, others have to wear also, otherwise they lose their caste! This is FASHION.

Then again, this fashion is changing every day, so to say; it is sure to change four times with the four seasons of the year, and, besides, many other times as well. The rich people have their dresses made after the latest fashion by expert firms; those who belong to the middle classes have them often done at home by women-tailors, or do them themselves. If the new fashion approaches very near to their last one, then they just change or adjust their clothes accordingly; otherwise, they buy new ones. The wealthy classes give away their dresses which have gone out of fashion to their dependents and servants. The ladies' maids and valets sell them, and those are exported to the various colonies established by the Europeans in Africa, Asia, and Australia, and there they are used again. The dresses of those who are immensely rich are all ordered from Paris; the less wealthy have them copied in their own country by their own dressmakers. But the ladies' hats must be of French make. As a matter of fact, the dress of the English and the German women is not good; they do not generally follow the Paris fashions—except, of course, a few of the rich and the higher classes. So, the women of other countries indulge in jokes at their

expense. But men in England mostly dress very well. The American men and women, without distinction, wear very fashionable dress. Though the American Government imposes heavy duties on all dresses imported from London or Paris, to keep out foreign goods from the country —yet, all the same, the women order their dress from Paris, and men, from London. Thousands of men and women are employed in daily introducing into the market woollen and silk fabrics of various kinds and colours, and thousands, again, are manufacturing all sorts of dresses out of them. Unless the dress is exactly up to date, ladies and gentlemen cannot walk in the street without being remarked upon by the fashionable. Though we have not all this botheration of the fashion in dress in our country, we have, instead, a fashion in ornaments, to a certain extent. The merchants dealing in silk, woollen, and other materials in the West have their watchful eyes always fixed on the way the fashion changes, and what sort of things people have begun to like; or they hit upon a new fashion, out of their own brain, and try to draw the attention of the people thereto. When once a merchant succeeds in gaining the eyes of the people to the fashion brought into the market by him, he is a made man for life. At the time of the Emperor Napoleon III of France, his wife, the Empress Eugenie, was the universally recognised avatar of fashion of the West. The shawl, of Kashmir were her special favourites, and therefore shawls worth millions of rupees used to be exported every year, in her time, from Kashmir to Europe. With the fall of Napoleon III, the fashion has changed, and Kashmir shawls no longer sell. And as for the merchants of our country, they always walk in the old rut. They could not opportunely hit upon any new style to catch the fancy of the West under the altered circumstances, and so the market was lost to them. Kashmir received a severe shock and her big and rich merchants all of a sudden failed.

This world, if you have the eyes to see, is yours—if not, it is mine; do you think that anyone waits for another? The Westerners are devising new means and methods to attract the luxuries and the comforts of different parts of the world. They watch the situation with ten eyes and work with two hundred hands, as it were; while we will never do what the authors of Shastras have not written in books, and thus we are moving in the same old groove, and there is no attempt to seek anything original and new; and the capacity to do that is lost to us now. The whole nation is rending the skies with the cry for food and dying of starvation. Whose fault is it? Ours! What means are we taking in hand to find a way out of the pitiable situation? Zero! Only making great noise by our big and empty talk! That is all that we are doing. Why not come put of your narrow comer and see, with your eyes open, how the world is moving onwards? Then the mind will open and the power of thinking and of timely action will come of itself. You certainly know the story of the Devas and the Asuras. The Devas have faith in their soul, in God, and in the after-life, while the Asuras give importance to this life, and devote themselves to enjoying this world and trying to have bodily comforts in every possible way. We do not mean to discuss here whether the Devas are better than the Asuras, or the Asuras than the Devas, but, reading their descriptions in the Purânas, the Asuras seem to be, truth to tell, more like MEN, and far more manly than the Devas; the Devas are inferior, without doubt, to the Asuras, in many respects. Now, to understand the East and the West, we cannot do better than interpret the Hindus as the sons of the Devas and the Westerners as the sons of the Asuras.

First, let us see about their respective ideas of cleanliness of the body. Purity means cleanliness

of mind and body; the latter is effected by the use of water etc. No nation in the world is as cleanly in the body as the Hindu, who uses water very freely. Taking a plunge bath is wellnigh scarce in other nations, with a few exceptions. The English have introduced it into their country after coming in contact with India. Even now, ask those of our students who have resided in England for education, and they will tell you how insufficient the arrangements for bathing are there. When the Westerners bathe—and that is once a week—they change their inner clothing. Of course, nowadays, among those who have means, many bathe daily and among Americans the number is larger; the Germans once in a week, the French and others very rarely! Spain and Italy are warm countries, but there it is still less! Imagine their eating of garlic in abundance, profuse perspiration day and night, and yet no bath! Ghosts must surely run away from them, what to say of men! What is meant by bath in the West? Why, the washing of face, head, and hands, i.e. only those parts which are exposed. A millionaire friend of mine once invited me to come over to Paris: Paris, which is the capital of modern civilisation—Paris, the heaven of luxury, fashion, and merriment on earth—the centre of arts and sciences. My friend accommodated me in a huge palatial hotel, where arrangements for meals were in a right royal style, but, for bath—well, no name of it. Two days I suffered silently—till at last I could bear it no longer, and had to address my friend thus: "Dear brother, let this royal luxury be with you and yours! I am panting to get out of this situation. Such hot weather, and no facility of bathing; if it continues like this, I shall be in imminent danger of turning mad like a rabid dog." Hearing this, my friend became very sorry for me and annoyed with the hotel authorities, and said: "I won't let you stay here any more, let us go and find out a better place". Twelve of the chief hotels were seen, but no place for bathing was there in any of them. There are independent bathing-houses, where one can go and have a bath for four or five rupees. Good heavens! That very afternoon I read in a paper that an old lady entered into the bath-tub and died then and there! Whatever the doctors may say, I am inclined to think that perhaps that was the first occasion in her life to come into contact with so much water, and the frame collapsed by the sudden shock! This is no exaggeration. Then, the Russians and some others are awfully unclean in that line. Starting from Tibet, it is about the same all over those regions. In every boarding house in America, of course, there is a bath-room, and an arrangement of pipe-water.

See, however, the difference here. Why do we Hindus bathe? Because of the fear of incurring sin. The Westerners wash their hands and face for cleanliness' sake. Bathing with us means pouring water over the body, though the oil and the dirt may stick on and show themselves. Again, our Southern Indian brothers decorate themselves with such long and wide caste-marks that it requires, perchance the use of a pumice-stone to rub them off. Our bath, on the other hand, is an easy matter—to have a plunge in, anywhere; but not so, in the West. There they have to put off a load of clothes, and how many buttons and hooks and eyes are there! We do not feel any delicacy to show our body; to them it is awful, but among men, say, between father and son, there is no impropriety; only before women you have to cover yourself cap-a-pie.

This custom of external cleanliness, like all other customs, sometimes turns out to be, in the long run, rather a tyranny or the very reverse of Âchâra (cleanliness). The European says that all bodily matters have to be attended to in private. Well and good. "It is vulgar to spit before other people. To rinse your mouth before others is disgraceful." So, for fear of censure, they do not

wash their mouth after meals, and the result is that the teeth gradually decay. Here is non-observance of cleanliness for fear of society or civilisation. With us, it is the other extreme—to rinse and wash the mouth before all men, or sitting in the street, making a noise as if you were sick—this is rather tyranny. Those things should, no doubt, be done privately and silently, but not to do them for fear of society is also equally wrong.

Again, society patiently bears and accommodates itself to those customs which are unavoidable in particular climates. In a warm country like ours, we drink glass after glass of water; now, how can we help eructating; but in the West, that habit is very ungentlemanly. But there, if you blow the nose and use your pocket handkerchief at the time of eating—that is not objectionable, but with us, it is disgusting. In a cold country like theirs, one cannot avoid doing it now and then.

We Hindus hold dirt in abomination very much, but, all the same, we are, in point of fact, frequently dirty ourselves. Dirt is so repugnant to us that if we touch it we bathe; and so to keep ourselves away from it, we leave a heap of it to rot near the house—the only thing to be careful about is not to touch it; but, on the other hand, do we ever think that we are living virtually in hell? To avoid one uncleanliness, we court another and a greater uncleanliness; to escape from one evil, we follow on the heels of another and a greater evil. He who keeps dirt heaped in his house is a sinner, no doubt about that. And for his retribution he has not to wait for the next life; it recoils on his head betimes—in this very life.

The grace of both Lakshmi (goddess of fortune) and Sarasvati (goddess of learning) now shines on the peoples of the Western countries. They do not stop at the mere acquisition of the objects of enjoyment, but in all their actions they seek for a sort of beauty and grace. In eating and drinking, in their homes and surroundings, in everything, they want to see an all-round elegance. We also had that trait once—when there was wealth and prosperity in the land. We have now too much poverty, but, to make matters worse, we are courting our ruin in two ways—namely, we are throwing away what we have as our own, and labouring in vain to make others' ideals and habits ours. Those national virtues that we had are gradually disappearing, and we are not acquiring any of the Western ones either? In sitting, walking, talking, etc., there was in the olden days a traditional, specific trait of our own; that is now gone, and withal we have not the ability to take in the Western modes of etiquette. Those ancient religious rites, practices, studies, etc., that were left to us, you are consigning to the tide-waters to be swept away—and yet something new and suitable to the exigencies of the time, to make up for them, is not striking its roots and becoming stable with us. In oscillating between these two lines, all our present distress lies. The Bengal that is to be has not as yet got a stable footing. It is our arts that have fared the worst of all. In the days gone by, our old women used to paint the floors, doors, and walls of their houses with a paste of rice-powder, drawing various beautiful figures; they used to cut plantain leaves in an artistic manner, to serve the food on; they used to lavish their art in nicely arranging the different comestibles on the plates. Those arts, in these days, have gradually disappeared or are doing so.

Of course new things have to be learnt, have to be introduced and worked out; but is that to be done by sweeping away all that is old, just because it is old? What new things have you learnt?

Not any—save and except a jumble of words! What really useful science or art have you acquired? Go, and see, even now in the distant villages, the old woodwork and brickwork. The carpenters of your towns cannot even turn out a decent pair of doors. Whether they are made for a hut or a mansion is hard to make out! They are only good at buying foreign tools, as if that is all of carpentry! Alas! That state of things has come upon all matters in our country. What we possessed as our own is all passing away, and yet, all that we have learnt from foreigners is the art of speechifying. Merely reading and talking! The Bengalis, and the Irish in Europe, are races cast in the same mould—only talking and talking, and bandying words. These two nations are adepts in making grandiloquent speeches. They are nowhere, when a jot of real practical work is required—over and above that, they are barking at each other and fighting among themselves all the days of their life!

In the West, they have a habit of keeping everything about themselves neat and clean, and even the poorest have an eye towards it. And this regard for cleanliness has to be observed; for, unless the people have clean suits of clothes, none will employ them in their service. Their servants, maids, cooks, etc., are all dressed in spotlessly clean clothes. Their houses are kept trim and tidy by being daily brushed, washed and dusted. A part of good breeding consists in not throwing things about, but keeping them in their proper places. Their kitchens look clean and bright—vegetable peelings and such other refuse are placed, for the time being in a separate receptacle, and taken, later on, by a scavenger to a distance and thrown away in a proper place set apart for the purpose. They do not throw such things about in their yards or on the roads.

The houses and other buildings of those who are wealthy are really a sight worth seeing—these are, night and day, a marvel of orderliness and cleanliness! Over and above that, they are in the habit of collecting art treasures from various countries, and adorning their rooms with them. As regards ourselves, we need not, of course, at any rate for the present, go in for collecting works of art as they do; but should we, or should we not, at least preserve those which we possess from going to ruin? It will take up a long time yet to become as good and efficient as they are in the arts of painting and sculpture. We were never very skilful in those two departments of art. By imitating the Europeans we at the utmost can only produce one or two Ravi Varmas among us! But far better than such artists are our Patuas (painter) who do the Châlchitras[6] of our goddesses, in Bengal. They display in their work at least a boldness in the brilliancy of their colours. The paintings of Ravi Varma and others make one hide one's face from shame! Far better are those gilded pictures of Jaipur and the Chalchitra of the goddess Durgâ that we have had from old times. I shall reserve my reflections on the European arts of sculpture and painting for some future occasion. That is too vast a subject to enter upon here.

6 Arch shaper frames over the images of deities, with Paurânika pictures.

III: Food and Cooking

Now hear something about the Western art of cooking. There is greater purity observed in our cooking than in any other country; on the other hand, we have not that perfect regularity, method and cleanliness of the English table. Every day our cook first bathes and changes his clothes before entering the kitchen; he neatly cleanses all the utensils and the hearth with water and earth, and if he chances to touch his face, nose, or any part of his body, he washes his hands before he touches again any food. The Western cook scarcely bathes; moreover, he tastes with a spoon the cooking he is engaged in, and does not think much of redipping the spoon into the pot. Taking out his handkerchief he blows his nose vigorously, and again with the same hand he, perchance, kneads the dough. He never thinks of washing his hands when he comes from outside, and begins his cooking at once. But all the same, he has snow-white clothes and cap. Maybe, he is dancing on the dough—why, because he may knead it thoroughly well with the whole pressure of his body, no matter if the sweat of his brow gets mixed with it! (Fortunately nowadays, machines are widely used for the task.) After all this sacrilege, when the bread is finished, it is placed on a porcelain dish covered with a snow-white napkin and is carried by the servant dressed in a spotless suit of clothes with white gloves on; then it is laid upon the table spread over with a clean table-cloth. Mark here, the gloves—lest the man touches anything with his bare fingers!

Observe ours on the other hand. Our Brahmin cook has first purified himself with a bath, and then cooked the dinner in thoroughly cleansed utensils, but he serves it to you on a plate on the bare floor which has been pasted over with earth and cow-dung; and his cloth, albeit daily washed, is so dirty that it looks as if it were never washed. And if the plantain-leaf, which sometimes serves the purpose of a plate, is torn, there is a good chance of the soup getting mixed up with the moist floor and cow-dung paste and giving rise to a wonderful taste!

After taking a nice bath we put on a dirty-looking cloth, almost sticky with oil; and in the West, they put on a perfectly clean suit on a dirty body, without having had a proper bath. Now, this is to be understood thoroughly—for here is the point of essential difference between the Orient and the Occident. That inward vision of the Hindu and the outward vision of the West, are manifest in all their respective manners and customs. The Hindu always looks inside, and the Westerner outside. The Hindu keeps diamonds wrapped in a rag, as it were; the Westerner preserves a lump of earth in a golden casket! The Hindu bathes to keep his body clean, he does not care how dirty his cloth may be; the Westerner takes care to wear clean clothes—what matters it if dirt remains on his body! The Hindu keeps neat and clean the rooms, doors, floors, and everything inside his house; what matters it if a heap of dirt and refuse lies outside his entrance door! The Westerner looks to covering his floors with bright and beautiful carpets, the dirt and dust under them is all right if concealed from view! The Hindu lets his drains run open over the road, the bad smell does not count much! The drains in the West are underground—the hotbed of typhoid fever! The Hindu cleanses the inside, the Westerner cleanses the outside.

What is wanted is a clean body with clean clothes. Rinsing the mouth, cleansing the teeth and all

that must be done—but in private. The dwelling-houses must be kept clean, as well as the streets and thoroughfares and all outlying places. The cook must keep his clothes clean as well as his body. Moreover, the meals must be partaken of in spotless cups and plates, sitting in a neat and tidy place. Achara or observance of the established rules of conduct in life is the first step to religion, and of that again, cleanliness of body and mind, cleanliness in everything, is the most important factor. Will one devoid of Achara ever attain to religion? Don't you see before your very eyes the miseries of those who are devoid of Achara? Should we not, thus paying dearly for it, learn the lesson? Cholera, malaria, and plague have made their permanent home in India, and are carrying away their victims by millions. Whose fault is it? Ours, to be sure. We are sadly devoid of Achara!

All our different sects of Hinduism admit the truth of the celebrated saying of the Shruti,[7] "आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः सत्त्वशुद्धौ ध्रुवा स्मृतिः—When the food is pure, then the inner-sense gets purified; on the purification of the innersense, memory (of the soul's perfection) becomes steady." Only, according to Shankarâchârya, the word Ahâra means the sense-perceptions, and Râmânuja takes the word to mean food. But what is the solution? All sects agree that both are necessary, and both ought to be taken into account. Without pure food, how can the Indriyas (organs) perform their respective functions properly? Everyone knows by experience that impure food weakens the power of receptivity of the Indriyas or makes them act in opposition to the will. It is a well-known fact that indigestion distorts the vision of things and makes one thing appeal as another, and that want of food makes the eyesight and other powers of the senses dim and weak. Similarly, it is often seen that some particular kind of food brings on some particular state of the body and the mind. This principle is at the root of those many rules which are so strictly enjoined in Hindu society—that we should take this sort and avoid that sort of food—though in many cases, forgetting their essential substance, the kernel, we are now busy only with quarelling about the shell and keeping watch and ward over it.

Râmânujâchârya asks us to avoid three sorts at defects which, according to him, make food impure. The first defect is that of the Jâti, i.e. the very nature or the species to which the food belongs, as onion, garlic, and so on. These have an exciting tendency and, when taken, produce restlessness of the mind, or in other words perturb the intellect. The next is that of Âshraya, i.e. the nature of the person from whom the food comes. The food coming from a wicked person will make one impure and think wicked thoughts, while the food coming from a good man will elevate one's thoughts. Then the other is Nimitta-dosha, i.e. impurity in food due to such agents in it as dirt and dust, worms or hair; taking such food also makes the mind impure. Of these three defects, anyone can eschew the Jati and the Nimitta, but it is not easy for all to avoid the Ashraya. It is only to avoid this Ashraya-dosha, that we have so much of "Don't-touchism" amongst us nowadays. "Don't touch me! " "Don't touch me!"

But in most cases, the cart is put before the horse; and the real meaning of the principle being misunderstood, it becomes in time a queer and hideous superstition. In these cases, the Acharas

7 Chhândogya Upanishad, VII. xxvi. 2.

of the great Âchâryas, the teachers of mankind, should be followed instead of the Lokâchâras. i.e. the customs followed by the people in general. One ought to read the lives of such great Masters as Shri Chaitanya Deva and other similarly great religious teachers and see how they behaved themselves with their fellow-men in this respect. As regards the Jati-dosha in food, no other country in the world furnishes a better field for its observation than India. The Indians, of all nations, take the purest of foods and, all over the world, there is no other country where the purity as regards the Jati is so well observed as in India. We had better attend to the Nimitta-dosha a little more now in India, as it is becoming a source of serious evil with us. It has become too common with us to buy food from the sweets-vendor's shop in the bazaar, and you can judge for yourselves how impure these confections are from the point of view of the Nimitta-dosha; for, being kept exposed, the dirt and dust of the roads as well as dead insects adhere to them, and how stale and polluted they must sometimes be. All this dyspepsia that you notice in every home and the prevalence of diabetes from which the townspeople suffer so much nowadays are due to the taking of impure food from the bazaars; and that the village-people are not as a rule so subject to these complaints is principally due to the fact that they have not these bazaars near them, where they can buy at their will such poisonous food as Loochi, Kachoori, etc. I shall dwell on this in detail later on.

This is, in short, the old general rule about food. But there were, and still are, many differences of opinion about it. Again, as in the old, so in the present day, there is a great controversy whether it is good or bad to take animal food or live only on a vegetable diet, whether we are benefited or otherwise by taking meat. Besides, the question whether it is right or wrong to kill animals has always been a matter of great dispute. One party says that to take away life is a sin, and on no account should it be done. The other party replies: "A fig for your opinion! It is simply impossible to live without killing." The Shastras also differ, and rather confuse one, on this point. In one place the Shastra dictates, "Kill animals in Yajnas", and again, in another place it says, "Never take away life". The Hindus hold that it is a sin to kill animals except in sacrifices, but one can with impunity enjoy the pleasure of eating meat after the animal is sacrificed in a Yajna. Indeed, there are certain rules prescribed for the householder in which he is required to kill animals on occasions, such as Shraddha and so on; and if he omits to kill animals at those times, he is condemned as a sinner. Manu says that if those that are invited to Shraddha and certain other ceremonies do not partake of the animal food offered there, they take birth in an animal body in their next.

On the other hand, the Jains, the Buddhists, and the Vaishnavas protest, saying, "We do not believe in the dictates of such Hindu Shastras; on no account should the taking away of life be tolerated." Asoka, the Buddhist emperor, we read, punished those who would perform Yajnas or offer meat to the invited at any ceremony. The position in which the modern Vaishnavas find

themselves is rather one of difficulty. Instances are found in the Râmâyana[8] and the Mahâbhârata[9] of the drinking of wine and the taking of meat by Rama and Krishna, whom they worship as God. Sita Devi vows meat, rice, and a thousand jars of wine to the river-goddess, Gangâ![10]

In the West, the contention is whether animal food is injurious to health or not, whether it is more strengthening than vegetable diet or not, and so on. One party says that those that take animal food suffer from all sorts of bodily complaints. The other contradicts this and says, "That is all fiction. If that were true, then the Hindus would have been the healthiest race, and the powerful nations, such as the English, the Americans, and others, whose principal food is meat, would have succumbed to all sorts of maladies and ceased to exist by this time." One says that the flesh of the goat makes the intellect like that of the goat, the flesh of the swine like that of the swine, and fish like that of the fish. The other declares that it can as well be argued then that the potato makes a potato-like brain, that vegetables make a vegetable-like brain—resembling dull and dead matter. Is it not better to have the intelligence of a living animal than to have the brain dull and inert like dead matter? One party says that those things which are in the chemical composition of animal food are also equally present in the vegetables. The other ridicules it and exclaims. "Why, they are in the air too. Go then and live on air only". One argues that the vegetarians are very painstaking and can go through hard and long-sustained labour. The other says, "If that were true, then the vegetarian nations would occupy the foremost rank, which is not

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8 सीतामादाय बाहुभ्यां मधुमैरेयकं शुचि ।
पाययामास काकुत्स्थः शचीमिन्द्रो यथामृतम् ॥
मांसानि च सुमृष्टानि विविधानि फलानि च ।
रामस्याभ्यवहारार्थं किंकरास्तूर्णमाहरन् ॥

— "Embracing Sitâ with both his arms, Kâkutstha (Râma) made her drink pure Maireya wine, even as Indra makes Shachi partake of nectar.
Servants quickly served flesh-meat variously dressed, and fruits of various kinds for the use of Rama."

9 उभौ मध्वासवक्षिप्तावुभौ चन्दनरूषितौ।
स्रग्विनौ वरवस्त्रौ तौ दिव्याभरणभूषितौ ॥

"(I saw) both of them (Krishna and Arjuna) drunk with Madhvâsava (sweet spirituous liquor made from honey), both adorned with sandal paste, garlanded, and wearing costly garments and beautiful ornaments." (Udyoga, LVIII. 5).

10 सुराघटसहस्रेण मांसभूतौदनेन च ।
यक्ष्ये त्वां प्रीयतां देवि पुरीं पुनरुपागता॥

"Be merciful to us, O goddess, and I shall, on my return home, worship thee with a thousand jars of arrack (spirituous liquor) and rice well-dressed with flesh-meat" (Ramayana).

the case, the strongest and foremost nations being always those that take animal food." Those who advocate animal food contend: "Look at the Hindus and the Chinamen, how poor they are. They do not take meat, but live somehow on the scanty diet of rice and all sorts of vegetables. Look at their miserable condition. And the Japanese were also in the same plight, but since they commenced taking meat, they turned over a new leaf. In the Indian regiments there are about a lac and a half of native sepoys; see how many of them are vegetarians. The best parts of them, such as the Sikhs and the Goorkhas, are never vegetarians". One party says, "Indigestion is due to animal food". The other says, "That is all stuff and nonsense. It is mostly the vegetarians who suffer from stomach complaints." Again, "It may be the vegetable food acts as an effective purgative to the system. But is that any reason that you should induce the whole world to take it?"

Whatever one or the other may say, the real fact, however, is that the nations who take the animal food are always, as a rule, notably brave, heroic and thoughtful. The nations who take animal food also assert that in those days when the smoke from Yajnas used to rise in the Indian sky and the Hindus used to take the meat of animals sacrificed, then only great religious geniuses and intellectual giants were born among them; but since the drifting of the Hindus into the Bâbâji's vegetarianism, not one great, original man arose midst them. Taking this view into account, the meat-eaters in our country are afraid to give up their habitual diet. The Ârya Samâjists are divided amongst themselves on this point, and a controversy is raging within their fold—one party holding that animal food is absolutely necessary, and the opposite party denouncing it as extremely wrong and unjust.

In this way, discussions of a conflicting character, giving rise to mutual abuses, quarrels, and fights, are going on. After carefully scrutinising all sides of the question and setting aside all fanaticism that is rampant on this delicate question of food, I must say that my conviction tends to confirm this view—that the Hindus are, after all right; I mean that injunction of the Hindu Shastras which lays down the rule that food, like many other things, must be different according to the difference of birth and profession; this is the sound conclusion. But the Hindus of the present day will neither follow their Shastras nor listen to what their great Acharyas taught.

To eat meat is surely barbarous and vegetable food is certainly purer—who can deny that? For him surely is a strict vegetarian diet whose one end is to lead solely a spiritual life. But he who has to steer the boat of his life with strenuous labour through the constant life-and-death struggles and the competition of this world must of necessity take meat. So long as there will be in human society such a thing as the triumph of the strong over the weak, animal food is required; otherwise, the weak will naturally be crushed under the feet of the strong. It will not do to quote solitary instances of the good effect of vegetable food on some particular person or persons: compare one nation with another and then draw conclusions.

The vegetarians, again, are also divided amongst themselves. Some say that rice, potatoes, wheat, barley, maize, and other starchy foods are of no use; these have been produced by man, and are the source of all maladies. Starchy food which generates sugar in the system is most injurious to health. Even horses and cows become sickly and diseased if kept within doors and

fed on wheat and rice; but they get well again if allowed to graze freely on the tender and growing herbage in the meadows. There is very little starchy substance in grass and nuts and other green edible herbs. The orang-outang eats grass and nuts and does not usually eat potato and wheat, but if he ever does so, he eats them before they are ripe, i.e. when there is not much starch in them. Others say that taking roast meat and plenty of fruit and milk is best suited to the attainment longevity. More especially, they who take much fruit regularly, do not so soon lose their youth, as the acid of fruit dissolves the foul crust formed on the bones which is mainly the cause of bringing on old age.

All these contentions have no end; they are going on unceasingly. Now the judicious view admitted by all in regard to this vexed question is, to take such food as is substantial and nutritious and at the same time, easily digested. The food should be such as contains the greatest nutriment in the smallest compass, and be at the same time quickly assimilable; otherwise, it has necessarily to be taken in large quantity, and consequently the whole day is required only to digest it. If all the energy is spent only in digesting food, what will there be left to do other works?

All fried things are really poisonous. The sweets-vendor's shop is Death's door. In hot countries, the less oil and clarified butter (ghee) taken the better. Butter is more easily digested than ghee. There is very little substance in snow-white flour; whole-wheat flour is good as food. For Bengal, the style and preparation of food that are still in vogue in our distant villages are commendable. What ancient Bengali poet do you find singing the praise of Loochi and Kachoori? These Loochis and Kachooris have been introduced into Bengal from the North-Western Provinces; but even there, people take them only occasionally. I have never seen even there anyone who lives mainly on things fried in ghee, day after day. The Chaube wrestlers of Mathura are, no doubt, fond of Loochis and sweetmeats; but in a few years Chaubeji's power of digestion is ruined, and he has to drug himself with appetising preparations called Churans.

The poor die of starvation because they can get nothing to eat, and the rich die of starvation because what they take is not food. Any and every stuff eaten is not food; that is real food which, when eaten, is well assimilated. It is better to fast rather than stuff oneself with anything and everything. In the delicacies of the sweetmeat shops there is hardly anything nourishing; on the other hand, there is—poison! Of old, people used to take those injurious things only occasionally; but now, the townspeople, especially those who come from villages to live in towns, are the greatest sinners in this respect, as they take them every day. What wonder is there that they die prematurely of dyspepsia! If you are hungry, throw away all sweets and things fried in ghee into the ditch, and buy a pice worth of Moorhi (popped rice)—that will be cheaper and more nutritious food. It is sufficient food to have rice, Dâl (lentils), whole-wheat Châpâtis (unfermented bread), fish, vegetables, and milk. But Dal has to be taken as the Southern Indians take it, that is, the soup of it only; the rest of the preparation give to the cattle. He may take meat who can afford it, but not making it too rich with heating spices, as the North-Western people do. The spices are no food at all; to take them in abundance is only due to a bad habit. Dal is a very substantial food but hard to digest. Pea-soup prepared of tender peas is easily digested and pleasant to the taste. In Paris this pea-soup is a favourite dish. First, boil the peas well, then make

a paste of them and mix them with water. Now strain the soup through a wire-strainer, like that in which milk is strained and all the outer skin will be separated. Then add some spices, such as turmeric, black pepper, etc., according to taste, and broil it with a little ghee in the pan—and you get a pleasant and wholesome Dal. The meat-eaters can make it delicious by cooking it with the head of a goat or fish.

That we have so many cases of diabetes in India is chiefly due to indigestion; of course there are solitary instances in which excessive brain work is the cause, but with the majority it is indigestion. Pot-belly is the foremost sign of indigestion. Does eating mean stuffing oneself? That much which on can assimilate is proper food for one. Growing thin or fat is equally due to indigestion. Do not give yourself up as lost because some symptoms of diabetes are noticeable in you; those are nothing in our country anti should not be taken seriously into account. Only, pay more attention to your diet so that you may avoid indigestion. Be in the open air as much as possible, and take good long walks and work hard. The muscles of the leg should be as hard as iron. If you are in service, take leave when possible and make a pilgrimage to the Badarikâshrama in the Himalayas. If the journey is accomplished on foot through the ascent and descent of two hundred miles in the hills, you will see that this ghost of diabetes will depart from you. Do not let the doctors come near you; most of them will harm you more than do any good; and so far as possible, never take medicines, which in most cases kill the patient sooner than the illness itself. If you can, walk all the way from town to your native village every year during the Puja vacation. To be rich in our country has come to be synonymous with being the embodiment of laziness and dependence. One who has to walk being supported by another, or one who has to be fed by another, is doomed to be miserable—is a veritable in valid. He who eats cautiously only the finer coating of the Loochi, for fear that the whole will not agree with him, is already dead in life. Is he a man or a worm who cannot walk twenty miles at a stretch. Who can save one who invites illness and premature death of his own will?

And as for fermented bread, it is also poison; do not touch it at all! Flour mixed with yeast becomes injurious. Never take any fermented thing; in this respect the prohibition in our Shastras of partaking of any such article of food is a fact of great importance. Any sweet thing which has turned sour is called in the Shastras "Shukta", and that is prohibited to be taken, excepting curd, which is good and beneficial. If you have to take bread, toast it well over the fire.

Impure water and impure food are the cause of all maladies. In America, nowadays, it has become a craze to purify the drinking water. The filter has had its day and is now discredited, because it only strains the water through, while all the finer germs of diseases such as cholera, plague, remain intact in it; moreover, the filter itself gradually becomes the hotbed of these germs. When the filter was first introduced in Calcutta, for five years, it is said there was no outbreak of cholera; since then it has become as bad as ever, for the reason that the huge filter itself has now come to be the vehicle of cholera germs. Of all kinds, the simple method that we have of placing three earthen jars one over another on a three-footed bamboo frame, is the best; but every second or third day the sand and charcoal should be changed, or used again after heating them. The method of straining water through a cloth containing a lump of alum in it, that we find in vogue in the villages along the banks of the Ganga in the vicinity of Calcutta, is the

best of all. The particles of alum taking with them all earth and impurities and the disease germs, gradually settle at the bottom of the deep jar as sediment; this simple system brings into disrepute pipewater and excels all your foreign filters. Moreover, if the water is boiled it becomes perfectly safe. Boil the water when the impurities are settled down by the alum, and then drink it, and throw away filters and such other things into the ditch. Now in America, the drinking water is first turned into vapour by means of huge machines; then the vapour is cooled down into water again, and through another machine pure air is pressed into it to substitute that air which goes out during the process of vaporization. This water is very pure and is used in every home.

In our country, he who has some means, feeds his children with all sorts of sweets and ghee-fried things, because, perchance, it is a shame—just think what the people will say!—to let them have only rice and Chapatis! What can you expect children fed like that to be but disproportionate in figure, lazy, worthless idiots, with no backbone of their own? The English people, who are so strong a race, who work so hard day and night, and whose native place is a cold country—even they hold in dread the very name of sweetmeats and food fried in butter! And we, who live in the zone of fire, as it were, who do not like to move from one place to another—what do we eat?—Loochis, Kachooris, sweets, and other things, all fried in ghee or oil! Formerly, our village zemindars in Bengal would think nothing of walking twenty or thirty miles, and would eat twice-twenty Koi-fish, bones and all—and they lived to a hundred years. Now their sons and grandsons come to Calcutta and put on airs, wear spectacles, eat the sweets from the bazaars, hire a carriage to go from one street to another, and then complain of diabetes—and their life is cut short; this is the result of their being "civilised, Calcutta-ised" people. And doctors and Vaidyas hasten their ruin too. They are all-knowing, they think they can cure anything with medicine. If there is a little flatulence, immediately some medicine is prescribed. Alas, it never enters into the heads of these Vaidyas to advise them to keep away from medicine, and go and have a good walk of four or five miles, or so.

I am seeing many countries, and many ways and preparations of food; but none of them approaches the admirable cooking of our various dishes of Bengal, and it is not too much to say that one should like to take rebirth for the sake of again enjoying their excellence. It is a great pity that one does not appreciate the value of teeth when one has them! Why should we imitate the West as regards food—and how many can afford to do so? The food which is suitable in our part of the country is pure Bengali food, cheap, wholesome, and nourishing, like that of the people of Eastern Bengal. Imitate their food as much as you can; the more you lean westwards to copy the modes of food, the worse you are, and the more uncivilized you become. You are Calcutta-ites, civilised, forsooth! Carried away by the charm of that destructive net which is of your own creation, the bazaar sweets, Bankura has consigned its popped-rice to the river Damodar, its Kalâi Dâl has been cast into the ditch, and Dacca and Vikrampur have thrown to the dogs their old dishes—or in other words, they have become "civilised"! You have gone to rack and ruin, and are leading others in the same path, toll townspeople, and you pride yourselves on your being "civilized"! And these provincial people are so foolish that they will eat all the refuse of Calcutta and suffer from dyspepsia and dysentery, but will not admit that it is not suiting them, and will defend themselves by saying that the air of Calcutta is damp and "saline"! They must by all means be townspeople in every respect!

So far, in brief, about the merits of food and other customs. Now I shall say something in the matter of what the Westerners generally eat, and how by degrees it has changed.

The food of the poor in all countries is some species of corn; herbs, vegetables, and fish and meat fall within the category of luxuries and are used in the shape of *chutney*. The crop which grows in abundance and is the chief produce of a country is the staple food of its poorer classes; as in Bengal, Orissa, Madras, and the Malabar coasts, the prime food is rice, pulse, and vegetables, and sometimes, fish and meat are used for *chutney* only. The food of the well-to-do class in other parts of India is Chapatis (unfermented bread) of wheat, and rice, of the people in general, mainly Chapatis of Bazrâ, Marhuâ, Janâr, Jhingorâ, and other corns.

All over India, herbs, vegetables, pulse, fish, and meat are used only to make tasteful the Roti (unfermented bread), or the rice, as the case may be, and hence they are called in Sanskrit, "Vyanjana", i.e. that which seasons food. In the Punjab, Rajputana, and the Deccan, though the rich people and the princes take many kinds of meat every day, yet with them even, the principal food is Roti or rice. He who takes daily one pound of meat, surely takes two pounds of Chapatis along with it.

Similarly in the West, the chief foods of the people in poor countries, and especially of the poor class in the rich parts, are bread and potatoes; meat is rarely taken, and, if taken, is considered as a *chutney*. In Spain, Portugal, Italy, and in other comparatively warm countries, grapes grow profusely, and the wine made of grapes is very cheap. These wines are not intoxicating (i.e.. unless one drinks a great quantity, one will not get intoxicated) and are very nutritious. The poor of those countries, therefore, use grape juice as a nourishment instead of fish and meat. But in the northern parts of Europe, such as Russia, Sweden, and Norway, bread made of rye, potatoes, and a little dried fish form the food of the poor classes.

The food of the wealthy classes of Europe, and of all the classes of America is quite different, that is to say, their chief food is fish and meat, and bread, rice, and other things are taken as *chutney*. In America, bread is taken very little. When fish is served, it is served by itself, or when meat is served, it is served by itself and is often taken without bread or rice. Therefore the plate has to be changed frequently; if there are ten sorts of food, the plate has to be changed as many times. If we were to take our food in this way, we should have to serve like this—suppose the Shukta (bitter curry) is first brought, and, changing that plate, Dal is served on another; in the same way the soup arrives; and again a little rice by itself, or a few Loochis, and so on. One benefit of this way of serving is that a little only of many varieties is taken, and it saves one from eating too much of anything. The French take coffee, and one or two slices of bread and butter in the morning, fish and meat, etc., in a moderate way about midday, and the principal meal comes at night. With the Italians and Spaniards, the custom is the same as that of the French. The Germans eat a good deal, five or six times a day, with more or less meat every time; the English, three times, the breakfast being rather small, but tea or coffee between; and the Americans also three times, but the meal is rather large every time, with plenty of meat. In all these countries, the principal meal is, however, dinner; the rich have French cooks and have food cooked after the

French fashion. To begin with, a little salted fish or roe, or some sort of *chutney* or vegetable—this is by way of stimulating the appetite; soup follows; then, according to the present day fashion, fruit; next comes fish; then a meat-curry; after which a joint of roast meat, and with it some vegetables; afterwards game birds, or venison, etc., then sweets, and finally, delicious ice-cream. At the table of the rich, the wine is changed every time the dish changes—and hock, claret, and iced champagne are served with the different courses. The spoon and knife and fork are also changed each time with the plate. After dinner—coffee without milk and liqueurs in very tiny glasses are brought in, and smoking comes last. The greater the variety of wines served with the various dishes, the greater will the host be regarded as a rich and wealthy man of fashion. As much money is spent over there in giving a dinner as would ruin a moderately rich man of our country.

Sitting cross-legged on a wooden seat on the ground, with a similar one to lean his back against, the Arya used to take his food on a single metal plate, placed on a slightly-raised wooden stool. The same custom is still in rogue in the Punjab, Rajputana, Mahârâshtra, and Gujarat. The people of Bengal, Orissa, Telinga, and Malabar, etc., do not use wooden stools to put the plates on, but take their food on a plate or a plantain-leaf placed on the ground. Even the Maharaja of Mysore does the same. The Mussulmans sit on a large, white sheet, when taking their food. The Burmese and the Japanese place their plates on the ground and sit supporting themselves on their knees and feet only, and not flat on their haunches like the Indians. The Chinamen sit on chairs, with their dishes placed on a table, and use spoons and wooden chop-sticks in taking their food. In the olden times, the Romans and Greeks had a table before them and, reclining on a couch, used to eat their food with their fingers. The Europeans also, sitting on chairs, used to take their food with their fingers from the table; now they have spoons and forks. The Chinese mode of eating is really an exercise requiring skill. As our Pân (betel)-vendors make, by dexterity of hand, two separate pieces of thin iron-sheets work like scissors in the trimming of Pan leaves, so the Chinese manipulate two sticks between two fingers and the palm of the right hand, in such a way as to make them act like tongs to carry the vegetables up to their mouths. Again, putting the two together, and holding a bowl of rice near the mouth, they push the rice in with the help of those sticks formed like a little shovel.

The primitive ancestors of every nation used to eat, it is said, whatever they could get. When they killed a big animal, they would make it last for a month and would not reject it even after it got rotten. Then gradually they became civilised and learnt cultivation. Formerly, they could not get their food every day by hunting and would, like the wild animals, gorge themselves one day and then starve four or five days in the week. Later they escaped that, for they could get their food every day by cultivation; but it remained a standing custom to take with food something like rotten meat or other things of the old days. Primarily, rotten meat was an indispensable article of food; now that or something else in its place became, like the sauce, a favourite relish. The Eskimos live in the snowy regions, where no kind of corn can be produced; their daily food is fish and flesh. Once in a way when they lose their appetite, they take just a piece of rotten flesh to recover their lost appetite. Even now, Europeans do not immediately cook wild birds, game, and venison, while fresh, but they keep them hanging till they begin to smell a little. In Calcutta the rotten meat of a deer is sold out as soon as brought to the market, and people prefer

some fish when slightly rotten. In some parts of Europe, the cheese which smells a little is regarded as very tasty. Even the vegetarians like to have a little onion and garlic; the Southern Indian Brahmin must have them in his cooking. But the Hindu Shastras prohibited that too, making it a sin to take onions, garlic, domestic fowl, and pork to one caste (the Brahmin); they that would take them would lose their caste. So the orthodox Hindus gave up onions and garlic, and substituted in their place asafoetida, a thing which is more strikingly offensive in smell than either of the other two! The orthodox Brahmins of the Himalayas similarly took to a kind of dried grass smelling just like garlic! And what harm in that? The scriptures do not say anything against taking these things!

Every religion contains some rules regarding the taking of certain foods, and the avoiding of others; only Christianity is an exception. The Jains and the Bauddhas will by no means take fish or meat. The Jains, again, will not even eat potatoes, radishes, or other vegetable roots, which grow underground, lest in digging them up worms are killed. They will not eat at night lest some insect get into their mouths in the dark. The Jews do not eat fish that have no scales, do not eat pork, nor the animals that are not cloven-hoofed and do not ruminate. Again, if milk or any preparation of milk be brought into the kitchen where fish or flesh is being cooked, the Jews will throw away everything cooked there. For this reason, the orthodox Jews do not eat the food cooked by other nations. Like the Hindus, too, they do not take flesh which is simply slaughtered and not offered to God. In Bengal and the Punjab, another name of flesh that is offered to the Goddess is Mahâprasâda, lit., the "great offering". The Jews do not eat flesh, unless it is Mahaprasada, i.e. unless it is properly offered to God. Hence, they, like the Hindus, are not permitted to buy flesh at any and every shop. The Mussulmans obey many rules similar to the Jews, but do not, like them, go to extremes; they do not take milk and fish or flesh at the same meal, but do not consider it so much harmful if they are in the same kitchen or if one touches another. There is much similarity respecting food between the Hindus and the Jews. The Jews, however, do not take wild boar, which the Hindus do. In the Punjab, on account of the deadly animosity between the Hindus and the Mussulmans, the former do what the latter will not, and the wild boar has come to be one of the very essential articles of food with the Hindus there. With the Rajputs, hunting the wild boar and partaking of its flesh is rather an act of Dharma. The taking of the flesh of even the domesticated pig prey ails to a great extent in the Deccan among all castes except the Brahmins. The Hindus eat the wild fowl (cock or hen), but not domesticated fowls.

The people of India from Bengal to Nepal and in the Himalayas as far as the borders of Kashmir, follow the same usages regarding food. In these parts, the customs of Manu are in force to a large extent even up to this day. But they obtain more especially in the parts from Kumaon to Kashmir than in Bengal, Bihar, Allahabad, or Nepal. For example, the Bengalis do not eat fowl or fowl's eggs, but they eat duck's eggs; so do the Nepalese; but from Kumaon upwards, even that is not allowed. The Kashmiris eat with pleasure eggs of the wild duck, but not of the domesticated bird. Of the people of India, beginning from Allahabad, excepting in the Himalayas, they who take the flesh of goat take fowl as well.

All these rules and prohibitions with respect to food are for the most part meant, no doubt, in the

interests of good health; of course, in each and every instance, it is difficult accurately to determine which particular food is conducive to health and which is not. Again, swine and fowls eat anything and everything and are very unclean; so they are forbidden. No one sees what the wild animals eat in the forest; so they are not disallowed. Besides, the wild animals are healthier and less sickly than the domesticated ones. Milk is very difficult of digestion, especially when one is suffering from acidity, and cases have happened when even by gulping down a glass of milk in haste, life has been jeopardised. Milk should be taken as a child does from its mother's breast; if it is sucked or sipped by degrees, it is easily digestible, otherwise not. Being itself hard of digestion, it becomes the more so when taken with flesh; so the Jews are prohibited from taking flesh and milk at the same meal.

The foolish and ignorant mother who forces her baby to swallow too much milk beats her breast in despair within a few months, on seeing that there is little hope of her darling's life! The modern medical authorities prescribe only a pint of milk even for an adult, and that is to be taken as slowly as possible; and for babies a "feeding-bottle" is the best means. Our mothers are too busy with household duties, so the maid-servant puts the crying baby in her lap and not unfrequently holds it down with her knee, and by means of a spoon makes it gulp down as much milk as she can. And the result is that generally it is afflicted with liver complaint and seldom grows up—that milk proves to be its doom; only those that have sufficient vitality to survive this sort of dangerous feeding attain a strong and healthy manhood. And think of our old-fashioned confinement rooms, of the hot fomentations given to the baby, and treatments of like nature. It was indeed a wonder and must have been a matter of special divine grace that the mother and the baby survived these severe trials and could become strong and healthy!

IV: Civilisation in Dress

In every country the respectability of a person is determined, to a certain extent, by the nature of the dress he wears. As our village-folk in Bengal say in their patois, "How can a gentleman be distinguished from one of low birth unless his income is known?" And not only income, "Unless it is seen how one dresses oneself, how can it be known if one is a gentleman?" This is the same all over the world, more or less. In Bengal, no gentleman can walk in the streets with only a loincloth on; while in other parts of India, no one goes out of doors but with a turban on his head. In the West, the French have all along taken the lead in everything—their food and their dress are imitated by others. Even now, though different parts of Europe have got different modes of clothes and dress of their own, yet when one earns a good deal of money and becomes a "gentleman", he straightway rejects his former native dress and substitutes the French mode in its place. The Dutch farmer whose native dress somewhat resembles the *paijâmâs* of the Kabulis, the Greek clothed in full skirts, the Russ dressed somewhat after the Tibetan fashion—as soon as they become "genteel", they wear French coats and pantaloons. Needless to speak of women—no sooner do they get rich than they must by any means have their dresses made in Paris. America, England, France, and Germany are now the rich countries in the West, and the dress of the people of these countries, one and all, is made after the French fashion, which is slowly and surely making its way into every part of Europe. The whole of Europe seems to be an imitation of France. However, men's clothes are better made nowadays in London than Paris, so men have them "London-made", and women in the Parisian style. Those who are very rich have their dresses sent from those two places. America enforces an exorbitant tax upon the importation of foreign dresses; notwithstanding that, the American women must have them from Paris and London. This, only the Americans can afford to do, for America is now the chief home of Kubera, the god of wealth.

The ancient Aryans used to put on the Dhoti and Châdar.[11] The Kshatriyas used to wear trousers and long coats when fighting. At other times they would use only the Dhoti and Chadar; and they wore the turban. The same custom is still in vogue, except in Bengal, among the people in all parts of India; they are not so particular about the dress for the rest of the body, but they must have a turban for the head. In former times, the same was also the custom for both the man and the women. In the sculptured figures of the Buddhistic period, the men and the women are seen to wear only a piece of Kaupin. Even Lord Buddha's father, though a king, is seen in some sculptures, sitting on a throne, dressed in the same way; so also the mother, only has, in addition, ornaments on her feet and arms; but they all have turbans! The Buddhist Emperor, Dharmâshoka, is seen sitting on a drum-shaped seat with only a Dhoti on, and a Chadar round his neck, and looking at damsels performing a dance before him; the dancing girls are very little clothed, having only short pieces of loose material hanging from the waist; but the glory is—that the turban is there, and it makes the principal feature of their dress. The high officials of the State who attended the royal court, are, however, dressed in excellent trousers and Chogas, or long

11 Dhoti is a piece of cloth about four or five yards long, worn by the Indians round the loins instead of breeches, and Chadar is a piece of cloth three yards long, used as a loose upper garment.

coats. When the King Nala, was disguised as a charioteer in to service of the King Rituparna, he drove the chariot at such a tremendous speed that the Chadar of the king Rituparna was blown away to such a distance that it could not be recovered; and as he had set out to marry, or join a Svayamvara, he had to do so, perchance, without a Chadar. The Dhoti and the Chadar are the time-honored dress of the Aryans. Hence, at the time of the performance of any religious ceremony, the rule among the Hindus even now is to put on the Dhoti and Chadar only.

The dress of the ancient Greeks and Romans was Dhoti and Chadar—one broad piece of cloth and another smaller one made in the form of the toga, from which the word Choga is derived. Sometimes they used also a shirt, and at the time of fighting, trousers and coats. The dress of the women was a long and sufficiently broad, square-shaped garment, similar to that formed by sewing two sheets lengthwise, which they slipped over the head and tied round, once under the breast and again round the waist. Then they fastened the upper parts which were open, over both the arms by means of large pins, in much the same way as the hill tribes of the northern Himalayas still wear their blankets. There was a Chadar over this long garment. This dress was very simple and elegant.

From the very old days, only the Iranians used shaped dresses. Perhaps they learnt it from the Chinese. The Chinese were the primeval teachers of civilisation in dress and other things pertaining to various comforts and luxuries. From time immemorial, the Chinese took their meals at a table, sitting on chairs, with many elaborate auxiliaries, and wore shaped dresses of many varieties—coat, cap, trousers, and so on.

On conquering Iran, Alexander gave up the old Greek Dhoti and Chadar and began using trousers. At this, his Greek soldiers became so disaffected towards him that they were on the point of mutiny. But Alexander was not the man to yield, and by the sheer force of his authority he introduced trousers and coats as a fashion in dress.

In a hot climate, the necessity of clothes is not so much felt. A mere Kaupin is enough for the purpose of decency; other clothes serve more as embellishments. In cold countries, as a matter of unavoidable necessity, the people, when uncivilised, clothe themselves with the skins of animals, and when they gradually become civilised, they learn the use of blankets, and by degrees, shaped dresses, such as pantaloons, coats, and so on. Of course it is impossible in cold countries to display the beauty of ornaments, which have to be worn on the bare body, for if they did so they would suffer severely from cold. So the fondness for ornaments is transfered to, and is satisfied by, the niceties of dress. As in India the fashions in ornaments change very often, so in the West the fashions in dress change every moment.

In cold countries, therefore, it is the rule that one should not appear before others without covering oneself from head to foot. In London, a gentleman or a lady cannot go out without conforming himself or herself exactly to what society demands. In the West, it is immodest for a woman to show her feet in society, but at a dance it is not improper to expose the face, shoulders, and upper part of the body to view. In our country, on the other hand, for a woman to show her face is a great shame, (hence that rigorous drawing of the veil), but not so the feet. Again, in

Rajputana and the Himalayas they cover the whole body except the waist!

In the West, actresses and dancing-girls are very thinly covered, to attract men. Their dancing often means exposing their limbs in harmonious movements accompanied by music. In our country, the women of gentle birth are not so particular in covering themselves thoroughly, but the dancing-girls are entirely covered. In the West, women are always completely clothed in the daytime; so attraction is greater in their being thinly covered. Our women remain in the house most of the time, and much dressing themselves is unusual; so with us, attraction is greater in their fully covering themselves. In Malabar, men and women have only a piece of cloth round their loins. With the Bengalis it is about the same, and before men, the women scrupulously draw their veils, and cover their bodies.

In all countries except China, I notice many queer and mysterious ideas of propriety—in some matters they are carried too far, in others again, what strikes one as being very incorrect is not felt to be so at all.

The Chinese of both sexes are always fully covered from head to foot. The Chinese are the disciples of Confucius, are the disciples of Buddha, and their morality is quite strict and refined. Obscene language, obscene books or pictures, any conduct the least obscene—and the offender is punished then and there. The Christian missionaries translated the Bible into the Chinese tongue. Now, in the Bible there are some passages so obscene as to put to shame some of the Purânas of the Hindus. Reading those indecorous passages, the Chinamen were so exasperated against Christianity that they made a point of never allowing the Bible to be circulated in their country. Over and above that, missionary women wearing evening dress and mixing freely with men invited the Chinese to their parties. The simpleminded Chinese were disgusted, and raised a cry, saying: Oh, horror! This religion is come to us to ruin our young boys, by giving them this Bible to read, and making them fall an easy prey to the charms of these half clothed wily women! This is why the Chinese are so very indignant with the Christians. Otherwise, the Chinese are very tolerant towards other religions. I hear that the missionaries have now printed an edition, leaving out the objectionable parts; but this step has made the Chinese more suspicious than before.

V: Etiquette and Manners

Again, in the West, ideas of decency and etiquette vary in accordance with the different countries. With the English and Americans they are of one type, is with the French of another, with the Germans again different. The Russians and the Tibetans have much in common; and the Turks have their own quite distinct customs, and so on.

In Europe and America, the people are extremely particular in observing privacy, much more than we are. We are vegetarians, and so eat a quantity of vegetables etc., and living in a hot country we frequently drink one or two glasses of water at a time. The peasant of the Upper Provinces eats two pounds of powdered barley, and then sets to drawing and drinking water from the shell every now and again, as he feels so thirsty. In summer we keep open places in our house for distributing water to the thirsty, through a hollowed bamboo stem. These ways make the people not so very particular about privacy; they cannot help it. Compare cowsheds and horses' stables with lions' and tigers' cages. Compare the dog with the goat. The food of the Westerners is chiefly meat, and in cold countries they hardly drink any water. Gentlemen take a little wine in small glasses. The French detest water; only Americans drink it in great quantities, for their country is very warm in summer. New York is even hotter than Calcutta. The Germans drink a good deal of beer, but not with their meals.

In cold countries, men are always susceptible to catching cold, so they cannot help sneezing; in warm countries people have to drink much water at meals, consequently we cannot help eructating. Now note the etiquette: if you do that in a Western society, your sin is unpardonable; but if you bring out your pocket handkerchief and blow your nose vigorously, it will see nothing objectionable in that. With us, the host will not feel satisfied, so to say, unless he sees you doing the former, as that is taken as a sign of a full meal; but what would you think of doing the latter when having a meal in the company of others?

In England and America, no mention of indigestion or any stomach complaints, you may be suffering from, should be made before women; it is a different matter, of course, if your friend is an old woman, or if she is quite well known to you. They are not so sensitive about these things in France. The Germans are even less particular.

English and American men are very guarded in their conversation before women; you cannot even speak of a "leg". The French, like us, are very free in conversation; the Germans and the Russians will use vulgar terms in the presence of anybody.

But conversations on being in love are freely carried on between mother and son, between brothers and sisters, and between them and their fathers. The father asks the daughter many questions about her lover (the future bridegroom) and cuts all sorts of jokes about her engagement. On such occasions, the French maiden modestly laughs down her head, the English maiden is bashful, and the American maiden gives him sharp replies to his face. Kissing and even embrace are not so very objectionable; these things can be talked of in society. But in our

country, no talk, nor even all indirect hint of love affairs, is permissible before superior relations.

The Westerners are now rich people. Unless one's dress is very clean and in conformity with strict etiquette, one will not be considered a gentleman and cannot mix in society. A gentleman must change his collar and shirt twice or thrice every day; the poor people, of course, cannot do this. On the outer garment there must not be stains or even a crease. However much you may suffer from heat, you must go out with gloves for fear of getting your hands dirty in the streets, and to shake hands with a lady with hands that are not clean is very ungentlemanlike. In polite society, if the act of spitting or rinsing the mouth or picking the teeth be ever indulged in—the offender will be marked as a Chandâla, a man of low caste, and shunned!

The Dharma of the Westerners is worship of Shakti—the Creative Power regarded as the Female Principle. It is with them somewhat like the Vâmâchâri's worship of woman. As the Tântrika says. "On the left side the women . . . on the right, the cup full of wine; in short, warm meat with ingredients . . . the Tantrika religion is very mysterious, inscrutable even to the Yogis." It is this worship of Shakti that is openly and universally practised. The idea of motherhood, i.e. the relation of a son to his mother, is also noticed in great measure. Protestantism as a force is not very significant in Europe, where the religion is, in fact, Roman Catholic. In the religion, Jehovah, Jesus, and the Trinity are secondary; there, the worship is for the Mother—She, the Mother, with the Child Jesus in her arms. The emperor cries "Mother", the field-marshal cries "Mother", the soldier with the flag in his hand cries "Mother", the seaman at the helm cries "Mother", the fisherman in his rags cries "Mother", the beggar in the street cries "Mother"! A million voices in a million ways, from a million places—from the palace, from the cottage, from the church, cry "Mother", "Mother", "Mother"! Everywhere is the cry "Ave Maria"; day and night, "Ave Maria", "Ave Maria"!

Next is the worship of the woman. This worship of Shakti is not lust, but is that Shakti-Pujâ, that worship of the Kumâri (virgin) and the Sadhavâ (the married woman whose husband is living), which is done in Varanasi, Kalighat, and other holy places. It is the worship of the Shakti, not in mere thought, not in imagination, but in actual, visible form. Our Shakti-worship is only in the holy places, and at certain times only is it performed; but theirs is in every place and always, for days, weeks, months, and years. Foremost is the woman's state, foremost is her dress, her seat, her food, her wants, and her comforts; the first honours in all respects are accorded to her. Not to speak of the noble-born, not to speak of the young and the fair, it is the worship of any and every woman, be she an acquaintance or a stranger. This Shakti-worship the Moors, the mixed Arab race, Mohammedan in religion, first introduced into Europe when they conquered Spain and ruled her for eight centuries. It was the Moors who first sowed in Europe the seeds of Western civilisation and Shakti-worship. In course of time, the Moors forgot this Shakti-Worship and fell from their position of strength, culture and glory, to live scattered and unrecognised in an unnoticed corner of Africa, and their power and civilisation passed over to Europe. The Mother, leaving the Moors, smiled Her loving blessings on the Christians and illumined their homes.

VI: France — Paris

What is this Europe? Why are the black, the bronze, the yellow, the red inhabitants of Asia, Africa, and America bent low at the feet of the Europeans? Why are they the sole rulers in this Kali-Yuga? To understand this Europe one has to understand her through France, the fountain-head of everything that is highest in the West. The supreme power that rules the world is Europe, and of this Europe the great centre is Paris. Paris is the centre of Western civilization. Here, in Paris, matures and ripens every idea of Western ethics, manners and customs, light or darkness, good or evil. This Paris is like a vast ocean, in which there is many a precious gem, coral, and pearl, and in which, again, there are sharks and other rapacious sea-animals as well. Of Europe, the central field of work, the Karmakshetra, is France. A picturesque country, neither very cold nor very warm, very fertile, weather neither excessively wet nor extremely dry, sky clear, sun sweet, elms and oaks in abundance, grass-lands charming, hills and rivers small, springs delightful. Excepting some parts of China, no other country in the world have I seen that is so beautiful as France. That play of beauty in water and fascination in land, that madness in the air, that ecstasy in the sky! Nature so lovely—the men so fond of beauty! The rich and the poor, the young and the old, keep their houses, their rooms, the streets, the fields, the gardens, the walks, so artistically neat and clean—the whole country looks like a picture. Such love of nature and art have I seen nowhere else, except in Japan. The palatial structures, the gardens resembling Indra's paradise, the groves, even the farmer's fields—everywhere and in everything there is an attempt at beauty, an attempt at art, remarkable and effected with success, too.

From ancient times, France has been the scene of conflict among the Gauls, the Romans, the Franks, and other nations. After the destruction of the Roman Empire, the Franks obtained absolute dominion over Europe. Their King, Charlemagne, forced Christianity into Europe, by the power of the sword. Europe was made known in Asia by these Franks. Hence we still call the Europeans Franki, Feringi, Planki or Filinga, and so on.

Ancient Greece, the fountain-head of Western civilisation, sank into oblivion from the pinnacle of her glory, the vast empire of Rome was broken into pieces by the dashing waves of the barbarian invaders—the light of Europe went out; it was at this time that another barbarous race rose out of obscurity in Asia—the Arabs. With extraordinary rapidity, that Arab tide began to spread over the different parts of the world. Powerful Persia had to kiss the ground before the Arabs and adopt the Mohammedan religion, with the result that the Mussulman religion took quite a new shape; the religion of the Arabs and the civilisation of Persia became intermingled.

With the sword of the Arabs, the Persian civilisation began to disseminate in all directions. That Persian civilisation had been borrowed from ancient Greece and India. From the East and from the West, the waves of Mussulman invaders dashed violently on Europe and along them also, the light of wisdom and civilisation began dispersing the darkness of blind and barbarous Europe. The wisdom, learning, and arts of ancient Greece entered into Italy, overpowered the barbarians, and with their quickening impulse, life began to pulsate in the dead body of the world-capital of Rome. The pulsation of this new life took a strong and formidable shape in the city of Florence —old Italy began showing signs of new life. This is called Renaissance, the new birth. But this new birth was for Italy only a rebirth; while for the rest of Europe, it was the first birth. Europe was born in the sixteenth century *A*.D. i.e. about the time when Akbar, Jehangir, Shahjahan, and

other Moghul Emperors firmly established their mighty empire in India.
Italy was an old nation. At the call of the Renaissance, she woke up and gave her response, but only to turn over on her side in bed, as it were, and fall fast asleep again. For various reasons, India also stirred up a little at this time. For three ruling generations from Akbar, learning, wisdom, and arts came to be much esteemed in India. But India was also a very old nation; and for some reason or other, she also did the same as Italy and slept on again.
In Europe, the tide of revival in Italy struck the powerful, young and new nation, the Franks. The torrent of civilisation, flowing from all quarters to Florence and there uniting, assumed a new form; but Italy had not the power within herself to hold that stupendous mass of fresh energy. The revival would have, as in India, ended there, had it not been for the good fortune of Europe that the new nation of the Franks gladly took up that energy, and they in vigour of their youthful blood boldly floated their national ship on the tide; and the current of that progress gradually gathered in volume and strength—from one it swelled into a thousand courses. The other nations of Europe greedily took the water of that tide into their own countries by cutting new channels, and increased its volume and speed by pouring their own lifeblood into it. That tidal wave broke, in the fullness of time, on the shores of India. It reached as far as the coast of Japan, and she became revitalised by bathing in its water. Japan is the new nation of Asia.
Paris is the fountain-head of European civilisation, as Gomukhi is of the Ganga. This huge metropolis is a vision of heaven on earth, the city of constant rejoicing. Such luxury, such enjoyments, such mirthfulness are neither in London nor in Berlin nor anywhere else. True, there is wealth in London and in New York, in Berlin there is learning and wisdom; but nowhere is that French soil, and above all, nowhere is that genius of the French man. Let there be wealth in plenty, let there be learning and wisdom, let there be beauty of nature also, elsewhere—but where is the MAN? This remarkable French character is the incarnation of the ancient Greek, as it were, that had died to be born again—always joyful, always full of enthusiasm, very light and silly, yet again exceedingly grave, prompt, and resolute to do every work, and again despondent at the least resistance. But that despondency is only for a moment with the Frenchman, his face soon after glowing again with fresh hope and trust.
The Paris University is the model of European universities. All the Academies of Science that are in the world are imitations of the French Academy. Paris is the first teacher of the founding of colonial empires. The terms used in military art in all languages are still mostly French. The style and diction of French writings are copied in all the European languages. Of science, philosophy, and art, this Paris is the mine. Everywhere, in every respect, there is imitation of the French. As if the French were the townspeople, and the other nations only villagers compared with them! What the French initiate, the Germans, the English, and other nations imitate, may be fifty or twenty-five years later, whether it be in learning, or in art, or in social matters. This French civilisation reached Scotland, and when the Scottish king became the king of England, it awoke and roused England; it was during the reign of the Stuart Dynasty of Scotland that the Royal Society and other institutions were established in England.
Again, France is the home of liberty. From here, the city of Paris, travelled with tremendous energy the power of the People, and shook the very foundations of Europe. From that time the face of Europe has completely changed and a new Europe has collie into existence. "*Liberté, Equalité, Fraternité*" is no more heard in France; she is now pursuing other ideas and other purposes, while the spirit of tile French Revolution is still working among the other nations of

Europe.
One distinguished scientist of England told me the other day that Paris was the centre of the world, and that the more a nation would succeed in establishing its connection with the city of Paris, the more would that nation's progress in national life be achieved. Though such assertion is a partial exaggeration of fact, yet it is certainly true that if anyone has to give to the world any new idea, this Paris is *the* place for its dissemination. If one can gain the approbation of the citizens of Paris, that voice the whole of Europe is sure to echo back. The sculptor, the painter the musician the dancer, or any artist, if he can first obtain celebrate in Paris, acquires very easily the esteem and eulogy of other countries.
We hear only of the darker side of this Paris in our country—that it is a horrible place, a hell on earth. Some of the English hold this view; and the wealthy people of other countries, in whose eyes no other enjoyment is possible in life except the gratification of the senses, naturally see Paris as the home of immorality and enjoyments.
But it is the same in all big cities of the West, such as London, Berlin, Vienna, New York. The only difference is: in other countries the means of enjoyment are commonplace and vulgar, but the very dirt of civilised Paris is coated over with gold leaf. To compare tile refined enjoyments of Paris with the barbarity, in this respect, of other cities is to compare the wild boar's wallowing in the mire with the peacock's dance spreading out its feathers like a fan.
What nation in the world has not the longing to enjoy and live a life of pleasure? Otherwise, why should those who get rich hasten to Paris of all places? Why do kings and emperors, assuming other names come to Paris and live incognito and feel themselves happy by bathing in this whirlpool of sense-enjoyment? The longing is in all countries, and no pains are spared to satisfy it; the only difference is: the French have perfected it as a science, they know how to enjoy, they have risen to the highest rung of the ladder of enjoyment.
Even then, most of the vulgar dances and amusements are for the foreigner; the French people are very cautious, they never waste money for nothing. All those luxuries, those expensive hotels and cafés, at which the cost of a dinner is enough to ruin one, are for the rich foolish foreigner. The French are highly refined, profuse in etiquette, polished and suave in their manners, clever in drawing money from one's pocket; and when they do, they laugh in their sleeve.
Besides, there is another thing to note. Society, as it is among the Americans, Germans, and the English, is open to all nations; so the foreigner can quickly see the ins and outs of it. After an acquaintance of a few days, the American will invite one to live in his house for a while; the Germans also do the same; and the English do so after a longer acquaintance. But it is very different with the French; a Frenchman will never invite one to live with his family unless he is very intimately acquainted with him. But when a foreigner gets such all opportunity and has occasion and time enough to see and know the family, he forms quite a different opinion from what he generally hears. Is it not equally foolish of foreigners to venture an opinion on our national character, as they do, by seeing only the low quarters of Calcutta? So with Paris. The unmarried women in France are as well guarded as in our country, they cannot even mix flatly in society; only after marriage can they do so in company with their husbands. Like us, their negotiations for marriage are carried on by their parents. Being a jolly people, none of their big social functions will be complete without professional dancers, as with us performances of dancing-girls are given on the occasions of marriage and Puja. Living in a dark foggy country, the English are gloomy, make long faces and remark that such dances at one's home are very

improper, but at a theatre they are all right. It should lie noted here that their dances may appear improper to our eyes, but not so with them, they being accustomed to them. The girl may, at a dance, appear in a dress showing the to neck and shoulders, and that is not taken as improper; and the English and Americans would not object to attending such dances, but on going hone, might not refrain from condemning tile French customs!

Again, the idea is the same everywhere regarding the chastity; of women, whose deviation from it is fraught with danger, but in the case of men it does not matter so much. The Frenchman is, no doubt, a little freer in this respect, and like the rich men of other countries cares not for criticism. Generally speaking, in Europe, the majority of men do not regard a little lax conduct as so very bad, and in the West, the same is the case with bachelors. The parents of young students consider it rather a drawback if the latter fight shy of women, lest they become effeminate. The one excellence which a man must have, in the West, is courage. Their word "virtue" and our word "Viratva" (heroism) are one and the same. Look to the derivation of the word "virtue" and see what they call goodness in man. For women, they hold chastity as the most important virtue, no doubt. One man marrying more than one wife is not so injurious to society as a woman having more than one husband at the same time, for the latter leads to the gradual decay of the race. Therefore, in all countries good care is taken to preserve the chastity of women. Behind this attempt of every society to preserve the chastity of women is seen the hand of nature. The tendency of nature is to multiply the population, and the chastity of women helps that tendency. Therefore, in being more anxious about the purity of women than of men, every society is only assisting nature in the fulfilment of her purpose.

The object of my speaking of these things is to impress upon you the fact that the life of each nation has a moral purpose of its own, and the manners and customs of a nation must be judged from the standpoint of that purpose. The Westerners should be seen through their eyes; to see them through our eyes, and for them to see us with theirs—both these are mistakes. The purpose of our life is quite the opposite of theirs. The Sanskrit name for a student, Brahmachârin, is synonymous with the Sanskrit word Kâmajit.[12] Our goal of life is Moksha; how can that be ever attained without Brahmacharya or absolute continence? Hence it is imposed upon our boys and youth as an indispensable condition during their studentship. The purpose of life in the West is Bhoga, enjoyment; hence much attention to strict Brahmacharya is not so indispensably necessary with them as it is with us.

Now, to return to Paris. There is no city in the world that can compare with modern Paris. Formerly it was quite different from what it is now—it was somewhat like the Bengali quarters of Varanasi, with zigzag lanes and streets, two houses joined together by an arch over the lane here and there, wells by the side of walls, and so on. In the last Exhibition they showed a model of old Paris, but that Paris has completely disappeared by gradual changes; the warfare and revolutions through which the city has passed have, each time, caused ravages in one part or another, razing every thing to the ground, and again, new Paris has risen in its place, cleaner and more extensive.

Modern Paris is, to a great extent, the creation of Napoleon III. He completed that material transformation of the city which had already been begun at the fall of the ancient monarchy. The student of the history of France need not be reminded how its people were oppressed by the

12 One who has full control over his passions.

absolute monarchs of France prior to the French Revolution. Napoleon III caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor by sheer force of arms, wading through blood. Since the first French Revolution, the French people were always fickle and thus a source of alarm to the Empire. Hence the Emperor, in order to keep his subjects contented and to please the ever-unstable masses of Paris by giving them work, went on continually making new and magnificent public roads and embankments and building gateways, theatres, and many other architectural structures, leaving the monuments of old Paris as before. Not only was the city traversed in all directions by new thoroughfares, straight and wide, with sumptuous houses raised or restored, but a line of fortification was built doubling the area of the city. Thus arose the boulevards, and the fine quarters of d'Antin and other neighbourhoods; and the avenue of the Champs Elysées, which is unique in the world was reconstructed. This avenue is so broad that down the middle and on both sides of it run gardens all along, and in one place it has taken a circular shape which comprises the city front, toward the West, called Place de la Concorde. Round this Place de la Concorde are statues in the form of women representing the eight chief towns of France. One of these statues represents the district of Strasburg. This district was wrested from the hands of the French by the Germans after the battle of 1870. The pain of this loss the French have not yet been able to get over, and that statue is still covered with flowers and garlands offered in memory of its dead spirit, as it were. As men place garlands over the tombs of their dead relations, so garlands are placed on that statue, at one time or another.

It seems to me that the Chandni Chauk of Delhi might have been at one time somewhat like this Place de la Concorde. Here and there columns of victory, triumphal arches and sculptural art in the form of huge statues of man and women, lions, etc., adorn the square.

A very big triumphal column in imitation of Trajan's Column, made of gun-metal (procured by melting 1,200 guns), is erected in Place Vendome in memory of the great hero, Napoleon I; on the sides are engraved the victories of his reign, and on the top is the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. In the Place de la Bastille stands the Column of July (in memory of the Revolution of July 1789) on the side of the old fortress, "The Bastille", afterwards used as a State prison. Here were imprisoned those who incurred the king's displeasure. In those old days, without any trial or anything of the kind, the king would issue a warrant bearing the royal seal, called "*Lettre de Cachet*". Then, without any inquiry as to what good acts the victim had done for his country, or whether he was really guilty or not, without even any question as to what he actually did to incur the king's wrath, he would be at once thrown into tile Bastille. If the fair favourites of the kings were displeased with anyone, they could obtain by request a "*Lettre de Cachet*" from the king against that man, and the poor man would at once be sent to the Bastille. Of the unfortunate who were imprisoned there, very few ever came out. When, afterwards, the whole country rose as one man in revolt against such oppression and tyranny and raised the cry of "Individual liberty, All are equal, No one is high or low", the people of Paris in their mad excitement attacked the king and queen. The very first thing the mob did was to pull down the Bastille, the symbol of extreme tyranny of man over man, and passed the night in dancing, singing, and feasting on the spot. The king tried to escape, but the people managed to catch him, and hearing that the father-in-law of the king, the Emperor of Austria, was sending soldiers to aid his son-in-law, became blind with rage and killed the king and the queen. The whole French nation became mad in the name of liberty and equality—France became a republic—they killed all the nobility whom they could get hold of, and many of the nobility gave up their titles and rank and made common cause with

the subject people. Not only so, they called all the nations of the world to rise—"Awake, kill the kings who are all tyrants, let all be free and have equal rights." Then all the kings of Europe began to tremble in fear lest this fire might spread into their countries, lest it might bum their thrones; and hence, determined to put it down, they attacked France from all directions. On the other side, the leaders of the French Republic proclaimed, "Our native land is in peril, come one and all", and the proclamation soon spread like the flames of a conflagration throughout the length and breadth of France. The young, the old, the men, the women, the rich, the poor, the high, the low, singing their martial song, *La Marseillaise*, the inspiring national song of France, came out—crowds of the poor French people, in rags, barefooted, in that severe cold, and half-starved—came out with guns on their shoulders—परित्राणाय ... विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् for the destruction of the wicked and the salvation of their homes—and boldly faced the vast united force of Europe. The whole of Europe could not stand the onrush of that French army. At the head and front of the French army, stood a hero at the movement of whose finger the whole world trembled. He was Napoleon. With the edge of the sword and at the point of the bayonet, he thrust "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" into the very bone and marrow of Europe—and thus the victory of the tri-coloured *Cocarde* was achieved. Later, Napoleon became the Emperor of France and successfully accomplished the consolidation of the French Empire.

Subsequently, not being favoured with an heir to the throne, he divorced the partner of his life in weal and woe, the guiding angel of his good fortune, the Empress Josephine, and married the daughter of the Emperor of Austria. But the wheel of his luck turned with his desertion of Josephine, his army died in the snow and ice during his expedition against Russia. Europe, getting this opportunity, forced him to abdicate his throne, sent him as an exile to an island, and put on the throne one of the old royal dynasty. The wounded lion escaped from the island and presented himself again in France; the whole of France welcomed him and rallied under his banner, and the reigning king fled. But this luck was broken once for all, and it never returned. Again the whole of Europe united against him and defeated him at the battle of Waterloo. Napoleon boarded an English man-of-war and surrendered himself; the English exiled him and kept him as a lifelong prisoner in the distant island of St. Helena. Again a member of the old royal family of France was reinstated as king. Later on, the French people became restless under the old monarchy, rose in rebellion, drove away the king and his family and re-established the Republic In the course of time a nephew of the great Napoleon became a favourite with the people, and by means of intrigues he proclaimed himself Emperor. He was Napoleon III. For some time his reign was very powerful; but being defeated in conflict with the Germans he lost his throne, and France became once more a republic; and since then down to the present day she has continued to be republican.

VII: Progress of Civilisation

The theory of evolution, which is the foundation of almost all the Indian schools of thought, has now made its way into the physical science of Europe. It has been held by the religions of all other countries except India that the universe in its entirety is composed of parts distinctly separate from each other. God, nature, man—each stands by itself, isolated from one another; likewise, beasts, birds, insects, trees, the earth, stones, metals, etc., are all distinct from one another; God created them separate from the beginning.

Knowledge is to find unity in the midst of diversity—to establish unity among things which appear to us to be different from one another. That particular relation by which man finds this sameness is called Law. This is what is known as Natural Law.

I have said before that our education, intelligence, and thought are all spiritual, all find expression in religion. In the West, their manifestation is in the external—in the physical and social planes. Thinkers in ancient India gradually came to understand that that idea of separateness was erroneous, that there was a connection among all those distinct objects—there was a unity which pervaded the whole universe—trees, shrubs, animals, men, Devas, even God Himself; the Advaitin reaching the climax in this line of thought declared all to be but the manifestations of the One. In reality, the metaphysical and the physical universe are one, and the name of this One is Brahman; and the perception of separateness is an error—they called it Mâyâ, Avidyâ or nescience. This is the end of knowledge.

If this matter is not comprehended at the present day by anyone outside India—for India we leave out of consideration—how is one to be regarded as a Pandit? However, most of the erudite men in the West are coming to understand this, in their own way—through physical science. But how that One has become the many—neither do we understand, nor do they. We, too, have offered the solution of this question by saying that it is beyond our understanding, which is limited. They, too, have done the same. But the variations that the One has undergone, the different sorts of species and individuality It is assuming—that can be understood, and the enquiry into this is called Science.

So almost all are now evolutionists in the West. As small animals through gradual steps change into bigger ones, and big animals sometimes deteriorate and become smaller and weaker, and in the course of time die out—so also, man is not born into a civilised state all on a sudden; in these days an assertion to the contrary is no longer believed in by anybody among the thoughtful in the West, especially because the evidence that their ancestors were in a savage state only a few centuries ago, and from that state such a great transformation has taken place in so short a time. So they say that all men must have gradually evolved, and are gradually evolving from the uncivilised state.

Primitive men used to mange their work with implements of wood and stone; they wore skins and leaves, and lived in mountain-caves or in huts thatched with leaves made somewhat after the

fashion of birds' nests, and thus somehow passed their days. Evidence in proof of this is being obtained in all countries by excavating the earth, and also in some few places, men at that same primitive stage are still living. Gradually men learnt to use metal—soft metals such as tin and copper—and found out how to make tools and weapons by fusing them. The ancient Greeks, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians did not know the use of iron for a long time—even when they became comparatively civilised and wrote books and used gold and silver. At that time, the Mexicans, the Peruvians, the Mayas, and other races among the aborigines of the New World were comparatively civilised and used to build large temples; the use of gold and silver was quite common amongst them (in fact the greed for their gold and silver led the Spaniards to destroy them). But they managed to make all these things, toiling very hard with flint instruments—they did not know iron even by name.

In the primitive stage, man used to kill wild animals and fish by means of bows and arrows, or by the use of a net, and live upon them. Gradually, he learnt to till the ground and tend the cattle. Taming wild animals, he made them work for him or reared them for his own eating when necessary; the cow, horse, hog, elephant, camel, goat, sheep, fowls, birds, and other animals became domesticated; of all these, the dog is the first friend of man.

So, in course of time, the tilling of the soil came into existence. The fruits, roots, herbs, vegetables, and the various cereals eaten by man are quite different now from what they were when they grew in a wild state. Through human exertion and cultivation wild fruits gained in size and acquired toothsomeness, and wild grass was transformed into delicious rice. Constant changes are going on, no doubt, in nature, by its own processes. Few species of trees and plants, birds and beasts are being always created in nature through changes, brought about by time, environment and other causes. Thus before the creation of man, nature was changing the trees, plants, and other animals by slow and gentle degrees, but when man came on the scene, he began to effect changes with rapid strides. He continually transported the native fauna and flora of one country to another, and by crossing them various new species of plants and animals were brought into existence.

In the primitive stage there was no marriage, but gradually matrimonial relations sprang up. At first, the matrimonial relation depended, amongst all communities, on the mother. There was not much fixity about the father, the children were named after the mother: all the wealth was in the hands of the women, for they were to bring up the children. In the course of time, wealth, the women included, passed into the hands of the male members. The male said, "All this wealth and grain are mine; I have grown these in the fields or got them by plunder and other means; and if anyone dispute my claims and want to have a share of them, I will fight him." In the same way he said, "All these women are exclusively mine; if anyone encroach upon my right in them, I will fight him." Thus there originated the modern marriage system. Women became as much the property of man as his slaves and chattels. The ancient marriage custom was that the males of one tribe married the women of another; and even then the women were snatched away by force. In course of time, this business of taking away the bride by violence dropped away, and marriage was contracted with the mutual consent of both parties. But every custom leaves a faint trace of itself behind, and even now we find in every country a mock attack is made on such occasions

upon the bridegroom. In Bengal and Europe, handfuls of rice are thrown at the bridegroom, and in Northern India the bride's women friends abuse the bridegroom's party calling them names, anti so on.

Society began to be formed and it varied according to different countries. Those who lived on the sea-shore mostly earned their livelihood by fishing in the sea, those on the plains by agriculture. The mountaineers kept large flocks of sheep, and the dwellers in the desert tended goats and camels. Others lived in the forests and maintained themselves by hunting. The dwellers on the plain learnt agriculture; their struggle for existence became less keen; they had time for thought and culture, and thus became more and more civilised. But with the advance of civilisation their bodies grew weaker and weaker. The difference in physique between those who always lived in the open air and whose principal article of food was animal diet, and others who dwelt in houses and lived mostly on grains and vegetables, became greater and greater. The hunter, the shepherd, the fisherman turned robbers or pirates whenever food became scarce and plundered the dwellers in the plains. These, in their turn, united themselves in bands of large numbers for the common interest of self-preservation; and thus little kingdoms began to be formed.

The Devas lived on grains and vegetables, were civilised, dwelt in villages, towns, and gardens, and wore woven clothing. The Asuras[13] dwelt in the hills and mountains, deserts or on the sea-shores, lived on wild animals, and the roots and fruits of the forests, and on what cereals they could get from the Devas in exchange for these or for their cows and sheep, and wore the hides of wild animals. The Devas were weak in body and could not endure hardships; the Asuras, on the other hand, were hardy with frequent fasting and were quite capable of suffering all sorts of hardships.

Whenever food was scarce among the Asuras, they set out from their hills and sea-shores to plunder towns and villages. At times they attacked the Devas for wealth and grains and whenever the Devas failed to unite themselves in large numbers against them, they were sure to die at the hands of the Asuras. But the Devas being stronger in intelligence, commenced inventing, all sorts of machines for warfare. The Brahmâstra, Garudâstra Vaishnavâstra, Shaivâstra—all these weapons of miraculous power belonged to the Devas. The Asuras fought with ordinary weapons, but they were enormously strong. They defeated the Devas repeatedly, but they never cared to become civilised, or learn agriculture, or cultivate their intellect. If the victorious Asuras tried to reign over the vanquished Devas in Svarga, they were sure to be outwitted by the Devas' superior intellect and skill, and, before long, turned into their slaves. At other times, the Asuras returned to their own places after plundering. The Devas, whenever they were united, forced them to retire, mark you, either into the hills or forests, or to the sea-shore. Gradually each party gained in numbers and became stronger and stronger; millions of Devas were united, and so were millions of Asuras. Violent conflicts and fighting went on, and along with them, the intermingling of these two forces.

13 The terms "Devas" and "Asuras" are used here in the sense in which they occur in the Gitâ (XVI), i.e. races in which the Daivi (divine) or the Âsuri (non-divine) traits preponderate.

From the fusion of these different types and races our modern societies, manners, and customs began to be evolved. New ideas sprang up and new sciences began to be cultivated. One class of men went on manufacturing articles of utility and comfort, either by manual or intellectual labour. A second class took upon themselves the charge of protecting them, and all proceeded to exchange these things. And it so happened that a band of fellows who were very clever undertook to take these things from one place to another and on the plea of remuneration for this, appropriated the major portion of their profit as their due. One tilled the ground, a second guarded the produce from being robbed, a third took it to another place and a fourth bought it. The cultivator got almost nothing; he who guarded the produce took away as much of it as he could by force; the merchant who brought it to the market took the lion's share; and the buyer had to pay out of all proportion for the things, and smarted under the burden! The protector came to be known as the king; he who took the commodities from one place to another was the merchant. These two did not produce anything—but still snatched away the best part of things and made themselves fat by virtually reaping most of the fruits of the cultivator's toil and labour. Tile poor fellows who produced all these things had often to go without his meals and cry to God for help!

Now, with the march of events, all these matters' grew more and more involved, knots upon knots multiplied, and out of this tangled network has evolved our modern complex society. But the marks of a bygone: character persist and do not die out completely. Those who in their former births tended sheep or lived by fishing or the like take to habits of piracy, robbery, and similar occupations in their civilised incarnation also. With no forests to hunt in, no hills or mountains in the neighbourhood on which to tend the flocks—by the accident of birth in a civilised society, he cannot get enough opportunity for either hunting, fishing, or grazing, cattle —he is obliged therefore to rob or steal, impelled by his own nature; what else can he do? And the worthy daughters of those far-famed ladies[14] of the Paurânika age, whose names we are to repeat every morning—they can no longer marry more than one husband at a time, even if they want to, and so they turn unchaste. In these and other ways, men of different types and dispositions, civilised and savage, born with the nature of the Devas and the Asuras have become fused together and form modern society. And that is why we see, in every society, God plating in these various forms—the Sâdhu Nârâyana, the robber Narayana, and so on. Again, the character of any particular society came to be determined as Daivi (divine) or Âsuri (non-divine) quality, in proportion as one or the other of these two different types of persons preponderated within it.

The whole of tile Asian civilization was first evolved on the plains near large rivers and on fertile soils—on the banks of the Ganga, the Yangtse-Kiang, and the Euphrates. The original foundation of all these civilisations is agriculture, and in all of there the Daivi nature predominates. Most of the European civilization, on the other hand, originated either in hilly countries or on the sea coasts—piracy and robbery form the basis of this civilisation; there the Asuri nature is preponderant.

So far as can be inferred in modern times, Central Asia and the deserts of Arabia seem to have

14 Ahalyâ, Târâ, Mandodari, Kunti, and Draupadi.

been the home of the Asuras. Issuing from their fastnesses, these shepherds and hunters, the descendants of the Asuras, being united in hordes after hordes, chased the civilized Devas and scattered them all over the world.

Of course there was a primitive race of aborigines in the continent of Europe. They lived in mountain-caves, and the more intelligent among them erected platforms by planting sticks in tile comparatively shallow parts of the water and built houses thereon. They used arrows, spearheads, knives, and axes, all made of flint, and managed every kind of work with them.

Gradually the current of the Asian races began to break forth upon Europe, and as its effects, some parts became comparatively civilised; the language of a certain people in Russia resembles the languages of Southern India.

But for the most part these barbarians remained as barbarous as ever, till a civilised race from Asia Minor conquered the adjacent parts of Europe and founded a high order of new civilization: to us they are known as Yavanas, to the Europeans as Greeks.

Afterwards, in Italy, a barbarous tribe known as the Romans conquered the civilised Etruscans, assimilated their culture and learning, and established a civilization of their own on the ruins of that of the conquered race. Gradually, the Romans carried their victorious arms in all directions; all the barbarous tribes in the southwest of Europe came under the suzerainty of Rome; only the barbarians of the forests living in the northern regions retained independence. In the efflux of time, however, the Romans became enervated by being slaves to wealth and luxury, and at that time Asia again let loose her armies of Asuras on Europe. Driven from their homes by the onslaught of these Asuras, the barbarians of Northern Europe fell upon the Roman Empire, and Rome was destroyed. Encountered by the force of this Asian invasion, a new race sprang up through the fusion of the European barbarians with the remnants of the Romans and Greeks. At that time, the Jews being conquered and driven away from their homes by the Romans, scattered themselves throughout Europe, and with them their new religion, Christianity, also spread all over Europe. All these different races and their creeds and ideas, all these different hordes of Asuras, heated by the fire of constant struggle and warfare, began to melt and fuse in Mahâmâyâ's crucible; and from that fusion the modern European race has sprung up.

Thus a barbarous, very barbarous European race came into existence, with all shades of complexion from the swarthy colour of the Hindus to the milk-white colour of the North, with black, brown, red, or white hair, black, grey, or blue eyes, resembling the fine features of face, the nose and eyes of the Hindus, or the flat faces of the Chinese. For some time they continued to tight among themselves; those of the north leading the life of pirates harassed and killed the comparatively civilised races. In the meantime, however, the two heads of the Christian Churches, the Pope (in French and Italian, *Pape*[15]) of Italy and the Patriarch of Constantinople, insinuating themselves, began to exercise their authority over these brutal barbarian hordes, over their kings, queens, and peoples.

15 pronounced as Pâp

On the other side, again Mohammedanism arose in the deserts of Arabia. The wild Arabs, inspired by tile teachings of a great sage, bore down upon the earth with all irresistible force and vigour. That torrent, carrying everything before it, entered Europe from both the East and the West, and along with this tide the learning and culture of India and ancient Greece were carried into Europe.

A tribe of Asuras from Central Asia known as the Seljuk Tartars, accepted Mohammedanism and conquered Asia Minor and other countries of Asia. The various attempts of the Arabs to conquer India proved unsuccessful. The wave of Mohammedan conquest, which had swallowed the whole earth, had to fall back before India. They attacked Sindh once, but could not told it: and they did not make any other attempt after that.

But a few centuries afterwards, when the Turks and other Tartar races were converted from Buddhism to Mohammedanism—at that time they conquered the Hindus, Persians, and Arabs, and brought all of them alike under their subjection. Of all the Mohammedan conquerors of India, none was an Arab or a Persian; they were all Turks and Tartars. In Rajputana, all the Mohammedan invaders were called Turks, and that is a true and historical fact. The Châran s of Rajputana sang "*turuganko bodhi jor* —The Turks are very powerful"—and that was true. From Kutubuddin down to the Mogul Emperors—all of them are Tartars. They are the same race to which the Tibetans belong; only they have become Mohammedans and changed their flat round faces by intermarrying with the Hindus and Persians. They are the same ancient races of Asuras. Even today they are reigning on the thrones of Kabul, Persia, Arabia, and Constantinople, and the Gândhâris (natives of Kandahar) and Persians are still the slaves of the Turks. The vast Empire of China, too, is lying at the feet of the Manchurian Tartars; only these Manchus have not given up their religion, have not become Mohammedans, they are disciples of the Grand Lama. These Asuras never care for learning and cultivation of the intellect; the only thing they understand is fighting. Very little of the warlike spirit is possible without a mixture of that blood; and it is that Tartar blood which is seen in the vigorous, martial spirit of Northern Europe, especially in the Russians, who have three-fourths of Tartar blood in their veins. The fight between the Devas and the Asuras will continue yet for a long time to come. The Devas marry the Asura girls and the Asuras snatch away Deva brides—it is this that leads to the formation of powerful mongrel races.

The Tartars seized and occupied the throne of tile Arabian Caliph, took possession of Jerusalem, the great Christian place of pilgrimage, and other plates, would not allow pilgrims to visit the holy sepulchre, and killed many Christians. The heads of the Christian Churches grew mad with rage and roused their barbarian disciples throughout Europe, who in their turn inflamed the kings and their subjects alike. Hordes of European barbarians rushed towards Asia Minor to deliver Jerusalem from the hands of the infidels. A good portion of them cut one another's throats, others died of disease, while the rest were killed by the Mohammedans. However, the blood was up of the wild barbarians, and no sooner had the Mohammedans killed them than they arrived in fresh numbers—with that clogged obstinacy of a wild savage. They thought nothing even of plundering their own men, and making meals of Mohammedans when they found nothing better.

It is well known that the English king Richard had a liking for Mohammedan flesh.

Here the result was the same, as usually happens in a war between barbarians and civilised men. Jerusalem and other places could not be conquered. But Europe began to be civilised. The English, French, German, and other savage nations who dressed themselves in hides and ate raw flesh, came in contact with Asian civilisation. An order of Christian soldiers of Italy and other countries, corresponding to our Nâgâs, began to learn philosophy; and one of their sects, the Knights Templars, became confirmed Advaita Vedantists, and ended by holding Christianity up to ridicule. Moreover, as they had amassed enormous riches, the kings of Europe, at the orders of the Pope, and under the pretext of saving religion, robbed and exterminated them.

On the other side, a tribe of Mohammedans, called the Moors, established a civilised kingdom in Spain, cultivated various branches of knowledge, and founded the first university in Europe. Students flocked from all parts, from Italy, France, and even from far-off England. The sons of royal families came to learn manners, etiquette civilisation, and the art of war. Houses, temples, edifices, and other architectural buildings began to be built after a new style.

But the whole of Europe was gradually transformed into a vast military camp—and this is even now the case. When the Mohammedans conquered any kingdom, their king kept a large part for himself, and the rest he distributed among his generals. These men did not pay any rent but had to supply the king with a certain number of soldiers in time of need. Thus the trouble of keeping a standing army always ready was avoided, and a powerful army was created which served only in time of war. This same idea still exists to a certain extent in Rajputana, and it was brought into the West by the Mohammedans. The Europeans took this system from the Mohammedans. But whereas with the Mohammedans there were the king and his groups of feudatory chiefs and their armies, and the rest—the body of the people—were ordinary subjects who were left unmolested in time of war—in Europe, on the other hand, the king and his groups of feudatory chiefs were on one side, and they turned all the subject people into their slaves. Everyone had to live under the shelter of a military feudatory chief, as his man, and then only was he allowed to live; he had to be always ready to fight at any time, at the word of command.

What is the meaning of the "Progress of Civilisation" which the Europeans boast so much about? The meaning of it is the successful accomplishment of the desired object by the justification of wrong means, i.e. by making the end justify the means. It makes acts of theft, falsehood, and hanging appear proper under certain circumstances; it vindicates Stanley's whipping of the hungry Mohammedan guards who accompanied him, for stealing a few mouthfuls of bread; it guides and justifies the well-known European ethics which says, "Get out from this place, I want to come in and possess it", the truth of which is borne out by the evidence of history, that where-ever the Europeans have gone, there has followed the extinction of the aboriginal races. In London, this "progress of civilisation" regards unfaithfulness in conjugal life, and, in Paris, the running away of a man, leaving his wife and children helpless and committing suicide as a mistake and not a crime.

Now compare the first three centuries of the quick spread of the civilisation of Islam with the

corresponding period of Christianity. Christianity, during its first three centuries, was not even successful ill making itself known to the world; and since the day when the sword of Constantine made a place for it in his kingdom, what support has Christianity ever lent to the spread of civilisation, either spiritual or secular? What reward did the Christian religion offer to that European Pandit who sought to prove for the first time that the Earth is a revolving planet? What scientist has ever been hailed with approval and enthusiasm by the Christian Church? Can the literature of the Christian flock consistently meet the requirements of legal jurisprudence, civil or criminal, or of arts and trade policies? Even now the "Church" does not sanction the diffusion of profane literature. Is it possible, still, for a man who has penetrated deep into modern learning and science to be an absolutely sincere Christian? In the New Testament there is no covert or overt praise of any arts and sciences. But there is scarcely any science or branch of art that is not sanctioned and held up for encouragement, directly or indirectly, in the Koran, or in the many passages of the Hadis, the traditional sayings of Mohammed. The greatest thinkers of Europe—Voltaire, Darwin, Büchner, Flammarion, Victor Hugo, anti a host of others like them—are in the present times denounced by Christianity and are victims of the vituperative tongues of its orthodox community. On the other hand, Islam regards such people to be believers in the existence of God, but only wanting in faith in the Prophet. Let there be a searching investigation into the respective merits of the two religions as regards their helpfulness, or the throwing of obstacles in the path of progress, and it will be seen that wherever Islam has gone, there it has preserved the aboriginal inhabitants—there those races still exist, their language and their nationality abide even to the present day.

Where can Christianity show such an achievement? Where are, today, the Arabs of Spain, and the aboriginal races of America? What treatment are the Christians according to the European Jews? With the single exception of charitable organisations no other line of work in Europe is in harmony with the teachings of the Gospel. Whatever heights of progress Europe has attained, every one of them has been gained by its revolt against Christianity—by its rising against the gospel. If Christianity had its old paramount sway in Europe today, it would have lighted the fire of the Inquisition against such modern scientists as Pasteur and Koch, and burnt Darwin and others of his school at the stake. In modern Europe Christianity and civilisation are two different things. Civilisation has now girded up her loins to destroy her old enemy, Christianity, to overthrow the clergy, and to wring educational and charitable institutions from their hands. But for the ignorance-ridden rustic masses, Christianity would never have been able for a moment to support its present despised existence, and would have been pulled out by its roots; for the urban poor are, even now, enemies of the Christian Church! Now compare this with Islam. In the Mohammedan countries, all the ordinances are firmly established upon the Islamic religion, and its own preachers are greatly venerated by all the officials of the State, and teachers of other religions also are respected.

The European civilisation may be likened to a piece of cloth, of which these are the materials: its loom is a vast temperate hilly country on the sea-shore; its cotton, a strong warlike mongrel race formed by the intermixture of various races; its warp is warfare in defence of one's self and one's religion. The one who wields the sword is great, and the one who cannot, gives up his independence and lines under the protection of some warrior's sword. Its woof is commerce. The

means to this civilisation is the sword; its auxiliary—courage and strength; its aim enjoyment here and thereafter.

And how is it with us? The Aryans are lovers of peace, cultivators of the soil, and are quite happy and contented if they can only rear their families undisturbed. In such a life they have ample leisure, and therefore greater opportunity of being thoughtful and civilised. Our King Janaka tilled the soil with his own hands, and he was also the greatest of the knowers of Truth, of his time. With us, Rishis, Munis, and Yogis have been born from the very beginning; they have known from the first that the world is a chimera. Plunder and fight as you may, the enjoyment that you are seeking is only in peace; and peace, in the renunciation of physical pleasures. Enjoyment lies not in physical development, but in the culture of the mind and the intellect.

It was the knowers who reclaimed the jungles for cultivation. Then, over that cleared plot of land was built the Vedic altar; in that pure sky of Bhârata, up rose the sacred smoke of Yajnas; in that air breathing peace, the Vedic Mantras echoed and re-echoed—and cattle and other beasts grazed without any fear of danger. The place of the sword was assigned at the feet of learning and Dharma. Its only work was to protect Dharma and save the lives of men and cattle The hero was the protector of the weak in danger—the Kshatriya. Ruling over the plough and the sword was Dharma, the protector of all. He is the King of kings; he is ever-awake even while the world sleeps. Everyone was free under the protection of Dharma.

And what your European Pundits say about the Aryan's swooping down from some foreign land, snatching away the lands of the aborigines and settling in India by exterminating them, is all pure nonsense, foolish talk! Strange, that our Indian scholars, too, say amen to them; and all these monstrous lies are being taught to our boys! This is very bad indeed.

I am an ignoramus myself; I do not pretend to any scholarship; but with the little that I understand, I strongly protested against these ideas at the Paris Congress. I have been talking with the Indian and European savants on the subject, and hope to raise many objections to this theory in detail, when time permits. And this I say to you—to our Pundits—also, "You are learned men, hunt up your old books and scriptures, please, and draw your own conclusions."

Whenever the Europeans find an opportunity, they exterminate the aborigines and settle down in ease and comfort on their lands; and therefore they think the Aryans must have done the same! The Westerners would be considered wretched vagabonds if they lived in their native homes depending wholly on their own internal resources, and so they have to run wildly about the world seeking how they can feed upon the fat of the land of others by spoliation and slaughter; and therefore they conclude the Aryans must have done the same! But where is your proof? Guess-work? Then keep your fanciful guesses to yourselves!

In what Veda, in what Sukta, do you find that the Aryans came into India from a foreign country? Where do you get the idea that they slaughtered the wild aborigines? What do you gain by talking such nonsense? Vain has been your study of the Râmâyana; why manufacture a big fine story out of it?

Well, what is the Ramayana? The conquest of the savage aborigines of Southern India by the Aryans! Indeed! Râmachandra is a civilised Aryan king, and with whom is he fighting? With King Râvana of Lankâ. Just read the Ramayana, and you will find that Ravana was rather more and not less civilised than Ramachandra. The civilisation of Lanka was rather higher, and surely not lower, than that of Ayodhyâ. And then, when were these Vânaras (monkeys) and other Southern Indians conquered? They were all, on the other hand, Ramachandra's friends and allies. Say which kingdoms of Vâli and Guhaka were annexed by Ramachandra?

It was quiet possible, however, that in a few places there were occasional fights between the Aryans and the aborigines; quite possible, that one or two cunning Munis pretended to meditate with closed eyes before their sacrificial fires in the jungles of the Râkshasas, waiting, however, all the time to see when the Rakshasas would throw stones and pieces of bone at them. No sooner had this been done than they would go whining to the kings. The mail clad kings armed with swords and weapons of steel would come on fiery steeds. But how long could the aborigines fight with their sticks and stones? So they were killed or chased away, and the kings returned to their capital. Well, all this may have been, hut how does this prove that their lands were taken away by the Aryans? Where in the Ramayana do you find that?

The loom of the fabric of Aryan civilisation is a vast, warm, level country, interspersed with broad, navigable rivers. The cotton of this cloth is composed of highly civilised, semi-civilised, and barbarian tribes, mostly Aryan. Its warp is Varnâshramâchâra,[16] and its woof, the conquest of strife and competition in nature.

And may I ask you, Europeans, what country you have ever raised to better conditions? Wherever you have found weaker races, you have exterminated them by the roots, as it were. You have settled on their lands, and they are gone for ever. What is the history of your America, your Australia, and New Zealand, your Pacific islands and South Africa? Where are those aboriginal races there today? They are all exterminated, you have killed them outright, as if they were wild beasts. It is only where you have not the power to do so, and there only, that other nations are still alive.

But India has never done that. The Aryans were kind and generous; and in their hearts which were large and unbounded as the ocean, and in their brains, gifted with superhuman genius, all these ephemeral and apparently pleasant but virtually beastly processes never found a place. And I ask you, fools of my own country, would there have been this institution of Varnashrama if the Aryans had exterminated the aborigines in order to settle on their lands?

The object of the peoples of Europe is to exterminate all in order to live themselves. The aim of the Aryans is to raise all up to their own level, nay, even to a higher level than themselves. The

16 The old Aryan institution of the four castes and stages of life. The former comprise the Brâhmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra, and the latter, Brahmacharya (student life), Gârhasthya (house-holder's life), Vânaprastha (hermit life), and Sannyâsa (life of renunciation).

means of European civilisation is the sword; of the Aryans, the division into different Varnas. This system of division into different Varnas is the stepping-stone to civilisation, making one rise higher and higher in proportion to one's learning and culture. In Europe, it is everywhere victory to the strong and death to the weak. In the land of Bhârata, every social rule is for the protection of the weak.

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